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THE PUBLIC USES OF THE BIBLE

A STUDY IN BIBLICAL ELOCUTION.

BY

GEORGE M. STONE.

WESTERN THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY,
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STORAGE

To my Wife.

PREFACE.

THIS study in vocal interpretation of the Bible had its origin in an incident of personal history. After a serious break-down, following a year of exhausting revival work, the writer's physician said quietly to his friends, "He will never preach another sermon." The symptoms, as they appear in review, were ominous and disheartening, but the issue was quite otherwise than that feared by the physician. An entire change of climate brought a new lease of hope, and with it there came, "little by little," ability to preach in the ordinary tones of conversation. This led to study of emphasis and inflection, with a view to economize vital force in speech, and this in turn to the application of the "Statutes of Expression" to Bible-reading. The results of study and practice in the directions indicated, were no less beneficial physically, than they were mentally gratifying. The subjects thus opened, have been followed up, with more or less industry and interest, ever since. The interval of cessation from preaching, after the break alluded to, was only a few weeks. For nearly twenty years since, the regular service

of the pulpit has been performed, with only three vacations of more than ordinary length.

Best of all results of this special interest in effective modes of speech, has been the perpetual pleasure arising from private and public reading of the Scriptures. Frequently in the study, the preparation for public service, by reading aloud, has let in strange and unwonted light upon the sacred lines of revealed truth, and put over passages, little understood before, an after-glow which has suggested new evidential sources of inspiration.

I have been indebted in the preparation of my book, especially to Prof. Briggs' carefully-made volume on "Biblical Study;" to Dr. N. J. Burton's Yale lectures; to Dr. De Witt's version of the Psalms; to Prof. Nathan Sheppard's incisive lectures "Before an Audience;" to Prof. J. H. McIlvaine's "Elocution," and to Prof. Austin Phelps' "Men and Books."

Chapter IX., on "The Physical Factor," was prepared originally for the *Homiletic Monthly*, under a form and title slightly different. The hints it contains, regarding the physical culture required for preaching, it was thought would have a value in the present work, and I have ventured to give it a place, with some slight modifications.

G. M. S.

Hartford, Conn., Oct., 1890.

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"The Bible is the Word of God, with all the peculiarities of man, and all the the authority of God."

Prof. Murphy.

"The Bible is authoritative, for it is the voice of God; it is intelligible, for it is the language of men."

Canon Westcott.

"Henry VIII. at last permitted the English Bible to be published. England had her book. Every one, says Stripe, who could buy the book, read it assiduously, or had it read to him by others, and many well advanced in years learned to read it with the same object. On Sunday the poor folk gathered at the bottom of the churches to hear it read."

H. A. Taine.

"Daniel Webster was for years the biblical concordance of the United States Senate. His ablest opponents, in preparing their speeches, used to resort to him to furnish them with Scriptural passages and metaphors to point their weapons against him. Such was his command of the same resources, that he could afford to give them liberally, and 'without upbraiding.'"

Prof. Austin Phelps.

CHAPTER I.

OUR ENGLISH BIBLE.

THE facts and terms of our redemption are in a book, or rather in sixty-two volumes, constituting together a unique and complete sacred library, which, for convenience, we bind together and call the Bible. These component parts of the one book present great contrasts in the times of their origin, their literary structure and specific purpose. The co-ordination and reciprocal aspects of these varied productions, coalescing into the unity of a consistent and harmonious body of revealed truth, are to be reckoned as among the most significant notes of Divine inspiration. The authors, separated by vast intervals of time, and working under the most diverse environments, "see eye to eye," and like the laborers who are carrying out the plan of an architect, under definite instructions, each bring their portions of the material needed to complete the earthly temple of Divine thought. We hear no sound of hammer or axe, but part is matched with part, and the edifice rises, as in the legend the walls of Thebes rose to the music of Amphion's strains.

The attempt to rule out of the court of Christ-

ian evidences the argument from design, has met conspicuous failure. The ancient witness, clothed in modern garb, and with rich store of new facts, is freely admitted at the tribunal of modern thought. It testifies not alone to marks of design in nature as proofs of creative intelligence, but to adaptations of the Bible to man's spiritual nature, as equally cogent and decisive respecting its origin. The Bible was made for man's soul as truly as external nature was made for his natural senses. The power which is in it, discloses itself to the spirit of man in such a manner as to verify its astonishing claims. It finds us in our deepest consciousness, and holds us in our highest aspirations, to objects which fix and satisfy them. Its mis-readings and perversions, ancient and modern, only emphasize the need of a personal trial of it. The German, Dorner, says: "He who wishes to know what Christianity, that magnitude in world history, professes to be, must keep to the Scriptures." He who enters this many-cloistered temple to find adaptations to his spirit will be reverent and teachable. He will not be falsely humble, so as to question the main condition which assures him of capacity for knowing the truth, when he has waited upon God for it. The Scriptures are to furnish "the man of God" thoroughly for every right thought, as well as for every good work. He will keep study and prayer in an equipoise,

like that of the forces which hold the planet in its orbit.

In making a plea for more careful reading of the Bible in the pulpit, we, of course, intend the reading of the English Bible. The version made in the reign of King James was completed in 1611. It displaced the Genevan version and the Bishops' Bible, after a long and somewhat sharp conflict. The Genevan version had been made in times of persecution, by English exiles, and with the assistance of the illustrious reformers, Calvin and Beza. Fresh copies were issued even after the middle of the seventeenth century. This version crossed the ocean with the refugees from oppression. It had numerous notes, and it is said the people complained, after it ceased to be printed, that "they could not see into the Scriptures for lack of the spectacles of the Genevan annotators." The Bishops' Bible was a revision of the version called the great Bible, as this latter was based upon a recension of the version of Tyndale. In fact, King James' translation, so-called, was a revision of the Bishops' Bible. Other men had labored, and the forty-seven scholars, who produced our standard English Bible, entered into their labors. The literary structure of the great heirloom is thus, like the English Common Law, the work of many generations. It has been recently enriched, by the mature scholar-

ship of our time, in the production of the Canterbury revision. For more than two and a half centuries the English Bible, in the form of King James' version, was the conspicuous literary factor in our civilization. The conquests of these pregnant centuries have been made under its prestige. Anywhere in England, from John O'Groat's to Lands' End, a quotation from Scripture is recognized and reverenced. It is quite different in France. The correspondent of a widely circulated Paris newspaper, writing from London, says: "The English are a strange people; over the Exchange they have this motto:

'The Earth is the Lord Mayor's; and the fullness thereof.'"

The contrast between the moral status of Scotland and Spain is due, in the main, to this biblical factor, present with one people and absent from the other. Wales and Italy present a lesson of similar contrast. The Puritans brought the Bible in the Mayflower. It wrought a century and a half before the crisis of the American Revolution. The difference between that revolution and the carnival of cruelty and unreason, which so nearly synchronizes with it, in France, is largely due to the pre-eminence of the Bible in the early colonial society. France had driven out her Bible-loving Huguenots. The Reformation, which was the unchaining of the Scriptures, was arrested there when it received hospitality

in Germany and England. Calvin, "the architectural mind" of the movement, who was a Frenchman, would have done for France what Luther did for Germany, but for the checks imposed; and the results of the French Revolution would probably have been achieved without those features which are the foulest blot upon the pages of modern history. Macaulay attributes the difference between Washington and Robespierre, between Franklin and Barrére, between the destruction of a few barrels of tea and the confiscation of thousands of square miles, between the tarring and feathering of a tax-gatherer and the massacres of September, to the difference between English rule in America and Bourbon rule in France. But the underlying cause of these contrasted conditions was the pervasive influence of that book which imparts to literature its noblest elements, and to all people who receive it, the conditions of virtue and stability.

The word-structure of our English Bible will be best understood by a study of the languages from which it was derived. With the exception that brief portions of the Old Testament have come to us in Chaldee, the Hebrew and Greek tongues are the moulds of biblical thought. The Hebrew, if generally unspoken by Hebrews, is not a dead tongue. If in any forms of speech there are "thoughts

that breathe," they are in this old Semitic tongue, whose dateless origin conducts us far backward toward the youth of the world. It was probably brought by that childlike man Abraham, from Ur of the Chaldees, across the desert to Canaan. The Euphrates, the Tigris and the Nile valleys, are linked with its history. On the banks of the Nile it was spoken by slaves, under the lash of task-masters. On the banks of the Euphrates by captives, under the eye of imperious sovereigns. Between these vicissitudes of its career it had been moulded into marvelous strength and beauty, as an instrument for the expression of Divine truth by statesmen and poets, by prophets and psalmists. It has been said that Moses was the father of the Hebrew language and literature, as Homer was of the Greek, and Luther of the German. A great company followed the lawgiver of the desert, who wrought with the same simple, direct, transparent speech, and who "spoke in it as they were moved by the Holy Spirit." Because it was the speech chosen by the Spirit, for the conveyance of His thoughts, we may properly conclude it was providentially fitted for its wonderful office. It has been said, "the forms and actions of nature are the vernacular, both of man and God, and so man and God meet at that point and understand each other." The Hebrew is pre-eminently the language of

nature. Its deepest conceptions are simply vestured in natural objects nearest at hand. The mountains, for instance, are employed over three hundred times in the Old Testament; the sea two hundred times. "The strength of the hills is His also;" and on its pages, the "trees of the field clap their hands." A discriminating critic has said, "In the Hebrew tongue the emotions overpower the thoughts, and carry them on in the rushing stream of expression. Hence the literature has a power over the souls of mankind. The language is expressive of emotion, as the face of a modest and untutored child; and the literature is but the speaking face of the heart of the Hebrew people."

Its emphasis is acquired by repetitions and sharp antitheses, as when sheer perpendicular cliffs stand out of a level plain. In its poetical portions, the parallelism of members is quite conspicuous, furnishing an easy and felicitous elaboration and re-statement of thought, which fixes the impression without monotonous repetition. The favorite nineteenth Psalm is a fine example of this duplication of idea, without detriment to its freshness, vigor and glow. The antitheses of Hebrew poetry are among its most intense and graphic productions. Here the dualistic structure sets the true and the false in most effective contrast, and requires for its proper interpretation by the voice great flexibility of tone.

The Greek language was perfected in "the fullness of times." It is a pliant, elastic tongue, the instrument of the reflective, analytical and reasoning mind. Long after Homer had given it the flowing measures of the Iliad, Plato, "the robed scholar," used it in the keen dialectics of his immortal dialogues, and moulded it to express the most delicate shades of thought. The Hebrew, it has been said, is the language of realism; the Greek is an ideal speech, changeful as the sea, and yet like the sea, capable of revealing depths and abysses. The Sermon on the Mount, the Gospel of John, and the Epistles of Paul, find an appropriate clothing in this affluent tongue. It was no dishonor to the Hebrew that it was not employed as the mould of New Testament thought. The great things of His Person who has been called "the Emperor of the Scriptures," could not be uttered in the tongue of the oriental sheik and the Bethlehem shepherd. Humanity passes on now to a grander stage, and shares in more significant events. Incarnation, redemption, the cross mystery, the resurrection, the mediatorial session, and the constellation of truths which gather about these events, were too great for the old Hebraic vessel, and a catholic, cosmical tongue, took its place. It is well that we become saturated with the imports of the Greek speech, if we would interpret the ideas which it enshrines.

Other things being equal, in the reading of our English Bible, the highest success will be reached by the man who has caught most accurately the peculiar genius and spirit of both the Hebrew and Greek languages. It has been said "the idioms of a language belong to its very structure," and he who can not only read between, but also below the lines of our best English version, and who can thus recognize idioms and roots, will be able to color his utterance at times with meanings which must escape the thought of others less thoroughly furnished. We may all congratulate ourselves upon a revival of interest recently in the study of words. "Words," it has been said, "have their ground-flavors and primeval undertone, and it is the privilege of every man to enter the secret of primary significances, and when he uses a word, to use it with a relish of its origin." If this implies labor, it is labor of the most fascinating and rewardful kind. As the wool takes its tinge from the dye, so has our best literature been penetrated by the version of King James. Prof. Austin Phelps, in "Men and Books," makes the following comprehensive statement of the influence which the matter and form of the English Scriptures have had upon the foremost writers of the English tongue :—

"Our own language owes, in part, the very structure it has received to our English Bible.

No Englishman or American knows well his mother-tongue till he has learned it in the vocabulary and the idioms of King James' translation. The language first crystallized around this translation as the German language did in less degree around Luther's Bible. In English form, the Bible stands at the head of the streams of English conquests, and of English and American colonization and commerce. It must control, to a great extent, the institutions which are to spring up on the banks of those streams the world over.

"It is interesting to observe how the influence of the Bible trickles down into crevices in all other literature, and shows itself at length in golden veins and precious gems of thought, which are the admiration of all observers. The late Professor B. B. Edwards, in illustration of this fact, notices the following details, viz., 'An essay has been written to prove how much Shakespeare is indebted to the Scriptures. The Red Cross Knight in the 'Faerie Queene' of Spenser is the Christian of the last chapter of the Epistle to the Ephesians. The 'Messiah' of Pope is only a paraphrase of some passages in Isaiah. The highest strains of Cowper in the 'Task' are an expansion of a chapter of the same prophet. The 'Thanatopsis' of Bryant is indebted to a passage from the Book of Job. Lord Byron's celebrated poem on 'Darkness' was founded on a passage in Jeremiah.'

"Wordsworth's criticism of Milton, that, 'however imbued the surface might be with classical literature, he was a Hebrew in soul,' is true of very much that is most inspiring and most durable in our modern poetry. Wordsworth's 'Ode on Immortality' could never have been written but for the creative effect upon the poet's imagination of such Scriptures as the fifteenth chapter of the first Epistle to the Corinthians and the eighth chapter of the Epistle to the Romans. Pantheism has a cool way of appropriating a great deal of Christian poetry. Thus it claims Wordsworth. But the most autobiographic passages in 'The Excursion,' descriptive of the communion of his soul with nature, could never have been conceived but by a mind which was permeated by the inspiration of the one hundred and forty-eighth Psalm.

> 'In such access of mind, in such high hour
> Of visitation from the living God,'

is the language in which he himself describes that communion."

"For if the trumpet give an uncertain voice, who shall prepare himself for war?" 1 Cor. xiv. 8.

"When Ajax strives some rock's vast weight to throw,
The line, too, labors and the words move slow;
Not so when swift Camilla scours the plain,
Flies over the unbending corn and skims along the main."
Pope.

"That which doth moderate the force and power, that which doth appoint the form and measure of working, the same we term a law." *Hooker.*

"God has employed certain colors in His creation as the unvarying accompaniment of all that is purest, most innocent, and most precious; while for things precious only in material uses, or dangerous, common colors are reserved."
Ruskin.

CHAPTER II.

THE BIBLE AND THE HUMAN VOICE.

LUTHER said the Bible had hands and feet. It is like Briareus, hundred-handed, so manifold are its outreachings and ingatherings. It can be made powerfully vocal, because it is thoroughly vital, pervaded from beginning to end by a circulating thought-life requiring many modulations for its expression. The Creation Epic has vast intervals of time between single verses. Its inclusive brevity and majestic simplicity must be recognized and pondered before any just interpretation of it can be made in reading. The initial verse of Genesis, without preface or preamble, breaks the silence of the mystery of origins, and in one luminous sentence discloses a personal Creator. A distinguished statesman has spoken of this opening sentence of the sacred canon as not exceeded in sublimity by any other declaration, inspired or uninspired.

What measured emphasis and reading between the words is necessary to a proper vocal rendering of the sentence, "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth!" The brevity and compactness of statement which characterize certain historical portions

of the Bible have no parallel in literature. Noah's vision of the future of his three sons, Shem, Ham and Japheth, is expressed in three short verses, but in these are folded up the germinal ideas of all history. Daniel's vision of the great monarchies of the world, from the Babylonian head of gold down to the end, is another instance of the vast outlook, reduced to most comprehensive terms of expression. Like the master strokes of the pencil or brush of a great artist, are the condensed statements of prophets, putting upon their sacred scroll the perspective which closes a long conflict scene in triumph. There are not lacking elaborations, revealing skill rarer than that which drew the figures wrought by Vulcan upon the shield of Achilles. The graphic scenes in the history of Joseph are drawn to the finest shades of human emotion, with touches of nature so genuine that they rank among the highest undesigned evidences of inspiration. To interpret by human tones the petulance of old Jacob when, just before the second journey into Egypt, he said to his sons : "Wherefore dealt ye so ill with me, as to tell the man whether ye had yet a brother?" one must sound "the depths and shoals" of human nature, as they are contained in the entire story of which this incident forms a single episode.

A professor of Hebrew has uttered his pro-

test against the designation of it as "a dead language." It is a most living and flexible tongue. To read it without variations of tone, and careful discrimination of emphasis, is to bind about it the bands of death. In the record of Joseph's dream one *sees* his bundle rising, and remaining upright, while the bundles of his brethren, as if instinct with life, come and bow themselves down to it.

In the poetry of the Old Testament, hospitality is given to every force and aspect of nature, as furnishing vesture and vehicle for the many-sided truths of revelation. The singers and players upon instruments who serve in this temple of truth, employ the mountains and the sea, the sun in bridegroom array, and the stars with their matin song and vesper hymn, to join in the chorus of praise to Jehovah, "who makes the clouds the dust of His feet," and whose "voice is upon many waters."

In the reading of dramatic compositions like the book of Job, intelligible vocal interpretation is impossible, without assigning to each one of the *dramatis personæ* their moral standpoint. The fact that so little has yet been done in the formal part of the translation of this book, to indicate the latter point sharply, imposes a burden all the heavier upon the reader who aims to disclose to his hearers the import of this ancient dialogue. Because the

personality of each speaker is more clear in the dialogues of Plato, it is easier to read them than to read the book of Job. Other reasons always exist to enhance the difficulty of interpreting Divine thought with the human voice. The inherent magnitude of the thought as being itself Divine, presents the first obstacle. Plato matches trained intellectual athletes in trials of dialectical fence. Job and his friends discuss the deepest problems of human suffering and destiny, emerging in the issue into the clear-toned utterances of Jehovah upon the disputed themes. Eschylus feels in the darkness for what David has found in the light.

Isaiah, from the fortieth chapter to the forty-ninth of his prophecy, enters into the soundless depths of the personality of Jehovah. He labors in the "mid-sea" of the attributes, not without success as the recorder of definite and crystalline conceptions of them. These astonishing pages forever refute the assertion that God is "unknowable," even while the light they shed makes the unfathomable darkness beyond visible, and thus sets a boundary to our thought. But to read these chapters up to the level of what is revealed in them, "*hoc opus, hic labor est.*"

In the New Testament the task of reading is complicated by the unique personality of Christ.

The evangelists intimate that there were

unreportable aspects of the look and manner of our Lord. The apostle John, in the opening verses of the thirteenth chapter of his gospel, suggests something in the chastened glory of His face, when He girded Himself with the towel, which no limner could transfer to canvas. It would be equally impossibe to reproduce His tones in the farewell interview which followed. He did not strive nor cry. His voice was in the minor key of lowly-hearted service. He did not need to lift it up. It created silence wherever it fell. Of course *His* reading was always interpretation. The Old Testament was not to Him "an unfathomable page." He could sound its depths, and give its thought expression in vocal utterance. What subtle power of modulation, inflection and emphasis were revealed in His speech! He read from within. He said "the words that I have spoken unto you *are spirit*, and are life." The great Tone Master saw into the hidden import of words, traced their origin at a glance, and filled His utterance with the secrets they bore. Sometimes by doubling a word He raises a sentence into importance and dignity. In the fourth gospel He frequently makes "Verily, verily," the two-fold portal to significant truth. More than once He summons His hearers to pause, and to deep, thoughtful study of single texts: "But go ye and learn what this meaneth; I desire mercy

and not sacrifice. For I came not to call the righteous but sinners." On another occasion He gathers up the symptoms of spiritual blessedness into the searching question: "Is it not for this cause that ye err, that ye know not the Scriptures nor the power of God?"

The representative Rabbi of Christ's time did not know the Scriptures. He could repeat the letter, but his speech did not represent its power. The blind led the blind. The dead spoke to the dead. The crew of the skeleton ship "raised their limbs like lifeless tools." So there was a perfunctory mouthing of the terms of Scripture by the scribes, whose natural result was "a famine of hearing the words of the Lord." No reading can interpret the Creator's word, unless there be insight of its content. True in-reading will bring us into sympathy with the men of the Bible.

We shall share their passion. When the apostle Peter interprets the prophet Joel on the day of Pentecost, he puts the old word and the present scene side by side, and says, "this is that." He saw what Joel had spoken actually transpiring before his eyes. A living writer has said: "Having faithfully listened to the great teachers, that you may enter into their thoughts, you have yet this higher advance to make, you have to enter into their heart. As you go to them first, for clear sight, so you must stay with them that you

may share at last their just and mighty passion. Passion or sensation; I am not afraid of the word, still less of the thing. You have heard many outcries against sensation lately; but I tell you it is not less sensation we want, but more. The ennobling difference between one man and another, between one animal and another, is precisely in this, that one feels more than another. We come to the great concourse of the dead, not merely to know from them what is true, but chiefly to feel with them what is righteous. Now, to feel with them, we must be like them, and none of us can become like them without pains. As true knowledge is disciplined and tested knowledge, not the first thought that comes, so the true passion is disciplined and tested passion, not the first passion that comes."

These words apply in their deepest intent to communion with the "concourse" of divinely-inspired men. We must be "baptized for the dead" by such an investiture with their spirit that we shall know them in measure as Elisha knew Elijah, or as John the Baptist knew his great Proto-type. Anteus was invincible as long as he kept in contact with the earth. The Master's open secret for our admission to His thought first, and then to His fervor, is that we "abide in Him." The emotions do not obey the direct behests of the

will. They require intermediate processes of thought. While we muse the fire burns. The "tongue of fire" is the symbol of the dispensation of the Spirit; and utterance of divine thought, when the proper conditions are met, is the highest ministry which man exercises toward his fellow-men.

Manifestly character is a fundamental factor in vocal interpretation. The Bible, above all other books, must be read from within. It has heights and depths untraversed even by angelic natures. The professional elocutionist cannot teach us how to bridge the chasm between the seventh and the eighth chapters of the epistle to the Romans. The seventh chapter records a conflict whose double background is heaven and hell. The shock and encounter of the soul, now awakened by the Holy Spirit, and now falling back under the bondage of the flesh, is like the contact and recoil of the contending forces at Waterloo. The eighth chapter is the sunburst of spiritual victory. Conviction of sin, followed by a surrender of the will, and the inevitable insight of faith, joy and love, raised to high degrees by the Holy Spirit, these are essential conditions of the just rendering of these marvelous chapters. Without these, all mere drill and vocal gymnastics must result in conspicuous failure. With these, however, proper training of the voice nobly facilitates the expression of in-

spired thought. In the highest vocal expression, the culture of the voice and the culture of the heart must each receive conscientious attention.

The conversations of Christ, when read with proper tone, emphasis and inflection, are revealed to an audience in their wonderfully realistic features. Take, for example, the coin scene in Matthew xxii. 15–23. A group of the Pharisees had been plotting to draw out from Christ a committal of Himself against Cæsar. They approach Him with a patronizing air, and, after some flattering words, inquire whether it is lawful to give tribute to Cæsar or not. The Master quietly asks them for a penny. The current Roman coin is handed Him. Taking it probably between His fingers, or laying it on His extended palm, He holds it up to the light, and after asking whose is the image and superscription, and eliciting their reply, He says: "Render therefore, unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's, and unto God the things that are God's." The evangelist adds that "when they heard these things they marveled, and went their way." The preacher who will take the pains to study such passages as these thoroughly, so as to be able to raise them from the printed page, and cause them to stand out in living relief before his hearers, will be amply repaid for his outlay by the

intense interest he will be able to excite in the Scriptures. New and surprising proofs of the genuineness and integrity of the sacred record will emerge unbidden as a result of such study and reading. The conviction will arise that scenes so natural, delineated by writers so artless and unaffected, could not have been forged. An expert, accustomed to compare genuine with forged documents, would decide upon such evidence as proper reading furnishes, that the events recorded in the Bible must have actually taken place. The epistles of Paul are hardly less stimulating and suggestive along this same line of evidence, provided only they have proper vocal interpretation, in connection with true spiritual insight. After much careful study of the epistle to the Romans, with reference to public reading, I venture the opinion that several of these chapters are Paul's reported addresses. They are forensic in their characteristic features. There are in them the heat and glow of argument with living objectors. He anticipates cavils, and replies with the warmth of personal debate.

It has been thought that Bishop Butler's "Analogy of Religion" was suggested by conversations heard at court, in which he doubtless engaged, while he was preacher at the Rolls Chapel. So we believe the apostle, writing to his Roman brethren in the intervals of laborious teaching, gathered up his own

discourses, struck off in the loving ardor of Christ's service, and these we have bound together for our learning in the imperial epistle to Christians in the imperial city. The best exposition of this epistle is the right reading of it.

The messages of the Bible are addressed to the human consciousness, and these find their surest path to that consciousness when the insight which comes of prayer and experience is voiced in the speech which comes through knowledge of the natural laws of sound. There is a profound and exquisite art in reading. The man who reads between the lines will discover, sometimes, a hidden import of which the original writer may have been at the time ignorant. Peter declares that the prophets did not minister unto themselves, but unto us, the mysteries of the holy Gospel. These mysteries the angels still desire to look into.

"I went by the field of the slothful,
And by the vineyard of the man void of understanding;
And, lo, it was all grown over with thorns,
The face thereof was covered with nettles,
And the stone wall thereof was broken down.
Then I beheld and considered well:
I saw, and received instruction.
Yet a little sleep, a little slumber,
A little folding of the hands to sleep:
So shall thy poverty come as a robber;
And thy want as an armed man."
—Prov. xxiv. 30–34.

"Truth in the Scriptures seems to have been *lived*, not said only. A soul breathes in it which speaks as never man spake." *Prof. Austin Phelps.*

"An' I hallus coomed to's choorch afoor my Sally wur dead,
An' 'eerd un a bummin' awaay loike a buzzard-clock ower my yead,
An' I niver knaw'd whot a mean'd but I thowt a 'ad summut to saay,
An' I thowt a said whot a owt to 'a said an' I comed awaay."

Tennyson's "Northern Farmer."

CHAPTER III.

READING WHICH DOES NOT INTERPRET.

In his first epistle to the Corinthians, the apostle Paul reminds those whom he was addressing, of the fact that he did not come to them simply in the character of a rhetorician. The art of the latter never could have wrought the transformation of character which had followed his preaching in the corrupt metropolis of Greece. His message had been in the demonstration of the Spirit, and had illustrated what power could flow through the intonations of human speech. He adds in the sixth verse of the second chapter of the epistle we have quoted, these words :

"Howbeit we speak wisdom among the perfect : yet a wisdom not of this world, nor of the rulers of this world, which are coming to nought: but we speak God's wisdom in a mystery, even the wisdom that hath been hidden, which God foreordained before the worlds unto our glory."

It is hardly possible that one who measured so justly the magnitude of his themes, could have been indifferent to the manner in which they were spoken. To Timothy, his "beloved child," he says :

"Give diligence to present thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, handling aright the word of truth;" and again, what hints of manner are there in his injunctions in the same chapter: "And the Lord's servant must not strive, but be gentle towards all, apt to teach, forbearing, in meekness correcting them that oppose themselves."

In the chapter following, where he enumerates the manifold uses of Scripture, for teaching, reproof, correction and instruction, that the man of God might be completely equipped for every exigency of service, there are implied the most versatile uses of speech in the application of the Word to the souls it is designed to save. The simple advice to "be natural," given a young student about to go out to address his fellow-men, to secure their obedience to Christ, does not meet his case. The question recurs, "What is natural?" Of Archbishop Whately himself, the most distinguished advocate of the "natural" theory, it was said:

"He goes through his addresses in so clumsy and inanimate a way that noble lords at once come to the conclusion that nothing so befits him as unbroken silence. He speaks in so low a tone as to be inaudible to those who are any distance from him. And not only is his voice low in its tones, but it is unpleasant

from its monotony. In his manner there is not a particle of life or spirit. You would fancy his grace to be half asleep while speaking. You see so little appearance of consciousness about him that you can hardly help doubting whether his legs will support him until he has finished his address."

What is properly natural for a given individual, is only in rare instances easily acquired. More frequently it is the result of stringent self-inspection and rigid self-correction. At least the sacred gift of individuality is to be respected and guarded. We may not

> "Merge in form and gloss
> The picturesque of man and man."

Let each man make the best of himself in reading, rather than to seek imitation of any other. The indifference of the hearer is far more frequently than we dream, due to the indifference of the speaker. He is unaware of the fact that certain tones blunt the edge of utterance, and by an inevitable law bring on an unalert drowsy condition of the faculties. Whole congregations are thus brought into a state of *coma*, to borrow a term from the physicians, and kept there during the hours of service. In the slovenly, monotonous form of address, every thought is reduced to the same level; no order of rank in ideas, or variation of emotion is revealed from the pages of the Scripture by the reader who is thus handicapped.

An expert horseman, who drove on the road much, said he relieved his horses by changing their gait, thus bringing new muscles into play, and giving rest to those which had become weary. Monotony of tone is disastrous in its physical effects, by reason of the unrelieved strain it brings upon certain parts of the vocal organism. The professional orator who, under favorable conditions, might thrill an audience for one evening, would find himself bankrupt in resources to instruct a congregation twice a Sunday for a year. There are alert and industrious pastors who preach with sustained and accumulating interest to the people for decades of years. But their success is not accidental. They have that quality of genius and that degree of grace which plods, and which does not ignore any of the conditions of power. They have learned the double secret of discovering truth and of bringing on susceptibility for it in human hearts. There are tones which open the closed doors of the spirit, and summon to wakeful activity all the latent capacity for attention of which that spirit is capable. The reader should recognize and cultivate this "open secret" of power.

The style prevalent upon the stage has sometimes found its way into the pulpit. There is no proper necessity for any critical estimate of the elocution of the theatre in the studies

herewith presented. Doubtless there are notable examples of true and felicitous interpretation of human emotions upon the stage. The current stagey tones are none the less execrable for this fact. Applied to the heights and depths of biblical truth, this truth perishes as by asphyxia in the process.

The words of the late Professor Nathan Sheppard upon this and kindred points are so clear and just that they deserve most deliberate study.

"It is a mischievous assumption of the elocutionists that the art of the actor and the art of the speaker are one and the same art, and are to be taught in the same way, and governed by the same fixed rules. Preachers will join in the odious comparison designed to exalt the seriousness and earnestness, not to say reverence and piety, of the dramatic profession at the expense of their own.

"To suppose that the preacher must necessarily be theatrical or dramatic in manner or delivery, in order to insure the success of his 'discourses from the pulpit upon subjects of highest importance,' is another of the flagrant errors that come of confounding the art of the actor with the art of the speaker. Some of the most effective speaking has been done by speakers who stuck to the colloquial element in both the manner and the matter of their discourses, whether scientific lectures, regula-

tion sermons, or reformatory speeches. They were, and are, in earnest, physically, mentally and morally, but not theatrically or histrionically in earnest. President Finney, one of the best reasoners the pulpit of this country has ever known, spoke uniformly in a conversational style, but he was in earnest, oppressively so sometimes. Never was there a more self-reliant speaker, or one that had a more complete control of himself, or who knew better what he and his audience were about. His elocution was in keeping with his argumentative style. The dramatic element would have been ridiculously out of keeping with it.

"It is worthy of note that 'the golden age' of the French pulpit was what is popularly understood as an age of earnestness in the pulpit. It was dramatic earnestness, physical earnestness, and had no more permanent effect upon the vices of society than the undemonstrative sermons of the preceding age. Kings and their mistresses listened with equal unconcern to the theatrical anathemas of the pulpit. Louis said they 'made him feel uncomfortable, but not long.' Indeed, the toleration of the clergy was owing to their ineffectiveness, whether they spoke with Massillon's persuasive eloquence or Bossuet's impressive gestures.

"Now, this dramatic element in public speaking seems to be the only element which the elocutionists recognize, whereas it is

neither the only nor the most important element. The colloquial is the more important, more in use, more to be depended upon in the long run."

The "churchly" tone is, equally with that of the stage, a travesty of truthful utterance. Like the effect of overtraining in any other direction, it breaks down just where it should be strong. Alas, the tones one hears in the English Cathedral are not like the gothic arch which springs above him, taken from nature! They are stilted, dull, soporific.

It remains to characterize briefly the "holy tone," once common on our American frontiers, but happily vanishing with the buffalo and the bear. The memory of certain cantillations heard in school-houses on the prairie's edge, or, in some instances, in the well-appointed church on Sunday, is associated with certain men of exceptional gifts of power in other respects. Were these men in the current of our present life, we dare to believe they would be among the first to avail themselves of the facilities to speak and read to true edification. In his able treatise upon Elocution, Professor J. H. McIlvaine says:

"The example of Socrates, in that he wrote nothing, but confined himself to oral discourse, shows his appreciation of the power with which thought is clothed by delivery.

"It may not be at once apparent how the

example of Socrates, who was not an orator in the common acceptation of the word, can be adduced in illustration of the importance of good delivery. But we must remember that he was eminently a talker, and perhaps the greatest master of the art of discourse in Athens, during the flourish and bloom of Athenian eloquence and culture. Also, he was the most successful educator, with a single exception, the world has ever seen. He educated a greater number of world-renowned men than ever before or since came forth from the school of any one teacher. His success appears so wonderful to those who have looked into it, that an eminent philosopher of modern times, Condillac, himself a practical educator, hazards the assertion that 'since the time of Socrates the secret of education has been lost.' Now, that all-moulding influence, which this man exerted, had for its sole instrumentality oral speaking; he wrote nothing. All that we know of the doctrines he inculcated, or of the methods he employed, is derived from the writings of his disciples; among whom such men as Plato and Xenophon could find no better way of commending their philosophical speculations to the world than by professing to report the conversations of their great master. So deeply was he impressed with the conviction that the great work which he had undertaken could be accomplished by no instrumen-

tality except oral speaking, that he deliberately rejected every other. For when they asked why he did not write out his teaching in a permanent form, he is said to have replied: 'I would rather write upon the hearts of living men than upon the skins of dead sheep.' The significance of such words from such a man can hardly be over-estimated.

"A similar but stronger argument may be drawn from the example of a greater than Socrates, our Lord Jesus Christ. He, being the incarnate Word of God, was the only perfect master of human eloquence that ever lived,—'*never man spake like this man.*' He also was an educator, who sought to impress Himself upon His disciples, and to mould them into His own likeness; and his success was such that they all became celebrated throughout the world, and their influence upon its history has been immeasurably greater than that of any other men the world has ever seen. He also wrote nothing; He confined Himself to the sole instrument of oral speech. Now, when we consider how desirable it seems to us that He should have written out in precise form, and in minute detail, those divine truths by the faith of which the world was to be regenerated and purified, instead of leaving them to be reported from His lips by those who heard Him, we cannot fail to see that it must have been with deliberate design that He

confined Himself to oral speech. He also evidently would write His doctrines upon the hearts of living men rather than upon the skins of dead sheep.

From this striking argument between the two greatest men (if it be lawful so to speak) and most successful educators the world has ever known, and whose vitalizing influence upon human nature has been so much deeper and wider and more permanent than that of any others, it may perhaps be inferred that Condillac's lost secret of education is to be found in that all-moulding, *personal* influence of the teacher, which can be exerted through no other instrumentality but that of the truth orally delivered. If this were so, it would teach us a lesson of transcendent value with respect to the importance of such a delivery as shall be adequate to express, and to impress upon others, the truth which we have to communicate."

"Speaking one to another in psalms, and hymns, and spiritual songs: singing and making melody with your heart to the Lord." Ephesians v. 19.

"What advantage then hath the Jew? or of what profit is the circumcision?

Much every way: first of all, that they were entrusted with the oracles of God." Romans iii. 1, 2.

"I was jealous of myself lest I should say anything to make my testimony look agreeable to that mind in the people which is not in pure obedience to the cross of Christ." *John Woolman.*

"The rod of Moses was worth more than a thousand spears of Pharaoh." *Martin Luther.*

CHAPTER IV.

READING WITHOUT COMMENT.

BETWEEN ordinary human speech and singing there is an ample sphere for cultivating modulation of tone and rhythmic melody of utterance, in which it is possible to reach the level of high and exquisite art. Original gifts of insight and aptitudes for expression have, in exceptional instances, enabled their possessors to interpret the thought of others, and express their own with a felicity which afforded rare enjoyment and help to their hearers. One of the most precious heirlooms in the memory of the writer is the hushed and rapt interest with which, when a lad, he listened to the reading and addresses given sometimes in a voice scarcely above a whisper of the late Bishop McIlvaine of Ohio. His reading was interpretation in the highest degree. Inflection, emphasis and chastened tone, "rightly divided the word of truth," illuminated obscure passages, and brought to light the hidden riches of secret places. Degrees of excellence in this direction worth striving after, are within the reach of every pastor who is called upon, as a part of his routine of service, to read publicly the Word of God. In non-

liturgical churches a large liberty as to the amount and character of Scripture employed in public worship is allowable. This fact has been the occasion of indifference to the value of this part of Divine service, and a consequent neglect of preparation for it. In a previous chapter we have already expressed thoughts upon "Reading which does not Interpret." It is sufficient for the present to say that deficiencies in the capacity to read well, are conspicuous not only in the graduate fresh from the seminary, but the experienced pastor freqently fails to interest his hearers in what should be a most edifying and stimulating division of the service. The vigor of the Lawgiver, the fire of the Prophet, the praiseful joy of the Psalmist, the solicitude of the ancient Shepherd of the people, die upon the lips of the indifferent reader. The preacher is called to utter God's thoughts to men, and these thoughts exist for him in the moulds of written language. With due care to ascertain the fact that the words he utters are the equivalent of those in which Divine thought was originally cast, his next solicitude should be to speak them exploratively, that is, truly.

Commentaries upon the text of Shakespeare are rare, as compared with those which have been written to elucidate the sacred text; for the reason, in part at least, that so much careful and painstaking labor

has been applied to the vocal rendering of the former. There are copies of the standard dramas of Shakespeare, with annotations to mark emphasis, which in some instances are the result of most patient and prolonged study. It is said the elder Mrs. Siddons changed a single intonation three times, after most painstaking study. Mrs. Jameson says: "In her impersonation of Lady Macbeth, Mrs. Siddons adopted three different intonations in giving the words, 'We fail.' (Scene VII. Act I.) At first, a quick, contemptuous interrogation, 'We fail?' Afterward, with a note of admiration, and an accent of indignant astonishment, laying the principal emphasis on the word *we*, '*We* fail!' Lastly, she fixed on what I am convinced is the true reading, 'We fail.' With the simple period, modulating her voice to deep, low, resolute tone, which settled the issue at once; as though she had said, 'If we fail, why then we fail, and all is over.'"

The side lights of geography, philosophy, topography and history, are of course not to be ignored in the study of Scripture with a view to vocal rendering. But the core and center of the Word, that soul of it which is alive, and which quickens us, finds best expression in tones which are the product of insight and the offspring of law. The difference between skilled labor and unskilled is notably con-

spicuous in reading. The outlay, which is for the modern musician the price of excellence and preferment, is very suggestive to the man who sets himself to the task of interpreting Divine thought to his fellows. The pianist requires of himself not simply incessant practice, but alertness of faculty, subtlety of touch, and crowning all, passionate enthusiasm, if he would rise above the mediocre grade of players. Madame Malibran, the distinguished vocalist, when complimented at the close of a concert upon her success in a certain trill, replied, "Oh, I have sought for it long enough! For three months I have been running after it. I have pursued it everywhere, while arranging my hair, while dressing, and I found it one morning in the bottom of my shoes as I was putting them on!"

These thoughts are designed to apply primarily to the reading of Scripture selections before or after the sermon. Why should not Bible reading sometimes follow the discourse, as well as precede it? They start, however, the question of reading the Bible as a stated service, giving an evening or a morning, as the circumstances would justify, to the careful rendering, with due emphasis and expression, to notable Scriptures which had become flexible to the mind and voice of the reader.

The epistle to the Colossians was written while Paul was in prison at Rome. Onesimus,

a penitent runaway slave, about to return to Colosse, and Tychicus, a companion of the apostle in former journeys, are in waiting to bear the priceless treasure over the old Roman roads to the Church to which it was addressed. As the captive apostle nears its close, he writes thus: "And when this epistle is read among you, cause that it be read also in the church of the Laodiceans, and that ye likewise read the epistle from Laodicea."

It is not difficult to imagine what took place at Colosse upon the arrival of these brethren. The news spread abroad, as good tidings always do, that a letter had been received by the pastor or deacon from the beloved apostle at Rome. Did not the church, moved by a spontaneous impulse, assemble to listen with eager interest to its contents? Then it was sent to Laodicea, and exchanged with the message sent to that assembly, which the Colossian Christians heard in turn. Do our modern churches need less to hear such epistles publicly read than did the primitive assemblies? It is quite true that copies of the Scriptures are now abundant and cheap; then they were rare and costly. But a new impression of the Word is given by passing it through human lips which have been taught to voice it with the clearness, dignity and beauty which it deserves. There are several reasons in favor of reading selected portions of the Bible

as a stated service, which I wish to adduce in this chapter upon reading without comment :

I. *It would restore a noble, but neglected usage.* The special direction of God to Moses was, that the Pentateuch should be publicly read once in seven years at the feast of Tabernacles. The account given in the eighth chapter of Nehemiah is very impressive.

"During the captivity it had been impossible to secure the observance of the injunction as to reading, and this was the first occasion on which the returned exiles had attempted to carry it out. We can readily understand, therefore, the peculiar emotion with which they sent back their responsive 'Amen' to the blessing pronounced by Ezra after he had unrolled the sacred parchment. But when he began to read, scarcely any of them comprehended what he said, for during their captivity they had grown up from childhood, hearing and using the Chaldee language, and so the pure Hebrew had become unknown save to the learned among them. To meet this difficulty, therefore, the friends on the platform beside Ezra took each his turn in interpreting to the multitude, 'reading distinctly and giving the sense and causing the people to understand the reading.' The effect of this upon the hearers was very great, 'for the people wept when they heard the words of the law.'"

There is a touching importunity in the exhortation which is connected with the command: "Gather the people together, men and women and children, and thy stranger that is within thy gates, that they may hear, and that they may learn, and fear the Lord your God, and observe to do all the words of this law.

"And that their children, which have not known anything, may hear, and learn to fear the Lord your God, as long as ye live in the land, whither ye go over Jordan to possess it."

The conspicuous feature of the synagogue service, even in Christ's day, was the reading of the law and the prophets. Geikie, who speaks of the synagogue as "the seed-bed of Judaism, its inspiring soul and abiding nature," is authority for the declaration that, "though a rabbi or other person, if present, might be asked to speak, this was in addition to the prescribed forms." Then the early Christian Church had its lectores, or readers, appointed for this special service. We hazard the opinion that ecclesiastical history will justify the statement that, generally, the Church has been sustained at its highest level of spiritual power, when the reading of the Bible in the tongue of the common people has formed a chief feature of worship. It is a curious fact, in this connection, that when Dr. Samuel Hopkins began, in 1755, while pastor

at Great Barrington, Mass., to read a chapter of the Bible before the morning and afternoon sermons, the practice was denounced and shunned as "episcopal." (See Park's "Memoir of Hopkins," page. 39.) If, in the Puritan period, this usage fell into decay, it must be attributed to a violent reaction from an offensive ritualism established by the state.

II. *A service of select readings would supplement, in a profitable manner, the preaching of the sermon.* It would sustain to the preaching a relation like that which the reading of the law does to the advocate's plea before the jury. The sermon of the morning, for instance, might be planned as an argument for some vital Christian doctrine; while the evening could be given to selected proofs of the same, drawn from different portions of the Bible. As an example, I introduce here the order of a Bible-reading for Sunday evening, to follow a sermon on the Atonement :—

1. The Atonement in type. (Ex. xii. 1–31.)
2. The Atonement in the Psalms. (Ps. xxii.)
3. The Atonement in prophecy. (Isa. liii.)
4. The Atonement in its historical accomplishment. (John xix.)
5. Doctrinal summary. (Heb. ix.)

Of course, the presence of the Holy Spirit, recognized as alike the vital energy of the Word itself, and the unction upon the reader, is an essential condition of success in such a service. The selected portions must also be

thoroughly mastered. The appropriation of Sunday evenings for Bible-reading, after this manner, might solve some of the difficulties which many pastors experience respecting a second service.

III. *This use of the Word of God would contribute powerfully to the education of the people in Bible truth.* We live in an era of books. Books, good, bad and indifferent, are published at a merely nominal cost. Our Divine book can be crowned, above all others, in the hearts of our people, if we magnify and make it honorable in public worship. M. Taine, in writing of the Christian renaissance, says: "Hence (from the Bible) have sprung much of the English language, and half of the English manners. To this day half of the country is biblical." The battle fought by the fathers to lift the Scriptures into this prominence must be fought over again by this generation. The surest path to victory is to read it and cause it to be read more extensively. If read in the manner we suggest, our congregations would receive some just impression of its comprehensive scope and marvelous unity. Much of Bible reading is too fragmentary to allow such an impression to be formed. The continuity and sweep of Divine thought is broken. Let a pastor, for instance, take the epistle of Paul to the Colossians and make it a subject of intense and loving study; let it be memorized in part,

if you choose, and then given to his people. What a solid and priceless treasure he would thus commit to them! What a self-evidencing power, respecting its divine inspiration, would be manifested! For, "faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God." A great statesman of the present century, who was a devoted student of "Paradise Lost," used to say, when his friends spoke of the great epic as dull, "Let me read you a few lines." This process was always a convincing one. So will the public reading of the Scriptures, if properly done, demonstrate their beauty and power. At a time when vital religion was dying out in Sweden, says Professor Phelps :

"There sprang up an obscure sect of 'Lascari,' as they were termed; that is, 'readers,' as I understand the title. They resembled in spirit the Methodists of England. They derived their name from the fact that their religious teachers, with no ecclesiastical status recognized by either Church or state, were simply readers of the Bible. They erected plain meeting-houses, like barns, to evade the laws of the realm against the unlicensed erection of churches. The people forsook the old temples of their fathers and flocked in thousands to the cheerless barns of the Lascari, to hear the Bible read. The clergy stood upon their dignity. They scolded the people from their

pulpits. The entire respectability of the kingdom frowned upon the innovation. But still the people thronged the meetings of the 'Readers.' Again they repeated the old story of Christian reform, that, as Dr. Chalmers said, Christianity is *not* a power of respectability only, but a power of regeneration. Awakened men and women from far and near came together to hear the voice which had raised them as from the dead. Some of them journeyed from ten to sixty miles for the purpose. Many gave evidence of spiritual conversion. The traveler who published the account in this country expressed the opinion that the hope of Protestantism in Sweden was no longer in the old church of Gustavus Adolphus: it was in the despised Lascari."

Thomas Cartwright, who has been called the "chief of the English Puritans," has adduced in quaint, old English, the following considerations by which the books of the Bible may be discerned to be the Word of God, all of which can be made more conspicuously evident, by careful reading aloud :

"First, they are perfectly holy in themselves, and by themselves : whereas all other writings are prophane, further than they draw holinesse from these; which yet is never such, but that their holinesse is imperfect and defective.

"Secondly, they are perfectly profitable in

themselves, to instruct to salvation, and all other are utterly unprofitable thereunto, any further than they draw from them.

"Thirdly, there is a perfect concord and harmonie in all these Bookes, notwithstanding the diversity of persons by whom, places where, and time when, and matters whereof, they have been written.

"Fourthly, there is an admirable force in them, to incline men's hearts from vice to vertue.

"Fifthly, in great plainenesse and easinesse of stile, there shineth a great Majesty and authority.

"Sixthly, there is such a gracious simplicity in the writers of these Bookes, that they neither spare their friends, nor themselves, but most freely, and impartially, set downe their owne faults and infirmities as well as others.

"Lastly, God's owne Spirit working in the harts of his children doth assure them that these Scriptures are the Word of God."

"And the Lord said unto him (Moses), Who hath made man's mouth? or maketh a man dumb, or deaf, or seeing, or blind? have not I the Lord?" Ex. iv. 11.

"A man is more than a soul. A man is a soul and body with all that it implies. And Jesus did not come to save souls any more than He came to save bodies, with all their belongings, conditions and inferences."

"It may be truly said that the position of any animal in the scale of life is truly dependent on the degree of development of its nervous system."

John W. Draper, M. D.

"The living body is a natural rhythmic machine, beating time to its arterial pulsations, its respiratory motions, and its executive actions as in working and walking."

Geo. H. Taylor, M. D.

CHAPTER V.

THE STATUTES OF EXPRESSION.

NATURE furnishes not only the idea of emphasis, but suggests *laws* under which it is to be applied. The statutes of sound are revealed with scientific accuracy in the world of life about us. Those who come nearest to the heartbeats of this living scene, have observed and recorded facts like the following: "A dead, dry branch breaks with a crackling noise; a living one more softly." "We get also gradations in the dignity of sound, from what we hear in the mewing of a cat, up to the surging of the sea." "The movement of the wind upon the trees in spring, produces sounds different from those which result from the same cause either in the full bloom of summer, or in autumn." "Under favorable circumstances, sailors, on board a vessel one hundred miles from shore, have heard the ringing of church bells, on placing their ears in the focus of the mainsail." The roar of the lion, the cooing of the dove, and the hiss of the serpent, express the nature peculiar to each of these creatures. In Shelley's exquisitively beautiful poem, "To the Skylark," he has caught in

the first verse, the subtle connection between nature and sound:—

"Hail to thee, blithe spirit!
Bird thou never wert,
That from heaven, or near it,
Pourest thy full heart
In profuse strains of unpremeditated art."

As evening comes on, everything animate and inanimate takes on the spirit of repose. In the second verse of the Elegy, Gray has thus described the soothing and tranquilizing approach of the period allotted to sleep:—

"Now fades the glimmering landscape on the sight,
And all the air a solemn stillness holds,
Save where the bettle wheels his droning flight,
And drowsy tinklings lull the distant folds."

The simple repetition of the last two lines would be in some measure an antidote for insomnia. The sounds of returning daylight are all-awakening. The morning comes with a peal of trumpets. Nature is in a state of expectancy, and ushers in the miracle of the new day with a chorus of enkindling praise. In the fifth verse of the Elegy we have a graphic delineation of the phenomena of day-break. The poet says of "the rude forefathers of the hamlet,"

"The breezy call of incense-breathing morn,
The swallow twittering from his straw-built shed;
The cock's shrill clarion, or the echoing horn,
No more shall rouse them from their lowly bed."

Nature makes no mistakes. Her call to rest,

and her summons to activity, are both given at their appropriate time. Health and sickness reveal themselves in vocal utterances. Cassius says when Cæsar had a fever in Spain, his tongue cried, "'Give me some drink, Titinius,' like a sick girl." A clear induction from these, and a great variety of kindred facts, furnishes several definite laws of expression which have upon them the seal of unquestionable authority.

1. In nature, sound corresponds to sense. It is the true utterance of the various conditions with which it is associated.

2. Nature abhors monotony. Everywhere there are variety, flexibility and modulation.

3. From the same source we have the idea of emphasis. Hence the law of the relative importance of different objects and events.

4. Sound in the living world is nearly always associated with action. There is a comprehensive system of gesture disclosed to us from this source.

5. Melody, which is "the rhythmical succession of single tones," will travel much farther than noise.

Humboldt has said "that in no other book of antiquity was there such a faithful and loving observation of nature as in the Bible." It takes cognizance of a wider circle of relations than other literature, and hence requires for its interpretation, the development of a more

varied range of emotions than any other book. But it will be found always obedient to the canons of just and natural expression. Each single portion of Scripture, to be well read, should be studied in connection with these statutes of speech, until the latter can be applied. If Garrick said of *his* master,

> "'Tis my chief wish, my joy, my only plan,
> To lose no drop of that immortal man,"

the disciple of Christ may have his mind and heart fused into an eagerness and glow, which will count no outlay too great, if he may but catch *His* tones, and reproduce *His* emphasis. There are several definite results of vocal interpretation, which loving and protracted study of select portions of the Bible, under the laws of expression, given above, will yield up to us.

I. We shall discriminate *the dominant tone and spirit of the passage* brought under the focus of the mind and heart. If we be spiritual men, and, at the period of study, flexible to the movement of the Holy Spirit, we shall not miss *His* meaning. This is the goal of all reading, viz., to be able to answer, by proper tones and emphasis, the question, What is the mind of the Spirit in the Scripture read? Thus Ezra and his companions, on the return from the captivity, "read in the book of the law of God distinctly, and gave the sense, and caused them to understand the reading." If

the office of the Levites, in this instance, was to translate the pure Hebrew into Chaldee, the vernacular of the exiles in Babylon, it may suggest the question, Whether the unnatural reading one hears at times, does not equally need a translation into the vernacular tones of daily life? A very latent and subtle bibliolatry frequently presents a natural and really impressive reading of the Word. The fifteenth chapter of First Corinthians, read in the sonorous, sepulchral tones which are heard so often on funeral occasions, is absolutely submerged as to its living and varied meaning. This chapter is a masterly argument, conducting the mind along the current of its progress with steady and powerful impetus, until it breaks out into a hallelujah chorus at its culmination. What the prevailing color is in a painting, what the air is in a strain of music, the ruling spirit of a chapter is to itself, provided the chapter has been so divided as to have unity in its subject-matter.

II. While every new subject is emphatic, we must assign to each its *proper importance and dignity*. Hence there is a profound doctrinal import in rightly applied tone and emphasis. Take the first verse of the first chapter of the Gospel by John: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." The verb *was*, in the last clause, frequently carries a

misplaced emphasis, which belongs to the name of the *Deity* with which the verse closes. As another illustration, take the passage in Matthew xix. 17. After the young ruler had asked what good thing he should do to have eternal life, "Jesus said unto him, Why callest thou me good? There is none good but one: that is God." First let the emphasis rest upon *me*. "Why callest thou *me* good?" Read again, emphasizing the first word of the sentence, "*Why* callest thou me good?" A discriminating friend has suggested that the first reading fails to recognize the Deity of Christ. In the second reading the Master seems to say, "Do you call me good, because you see in me marks of the Godhead, or simply to patronize me?" We may, by use or misuse of emphasis, read up or down the Deity of Jesus Christ.

III. The vast significance of the *pause*, will be recognised by all who investigate the Scriptures with a view to public reading. Almost no one reads them with the deliberation, which the gravity of their ineffable themes would seem to require.

IV. Chastened and appropriate *gesture* must be employed, at times, to give complete expression to the living, breathing words of Scripture.

The appropriateness of action in any degree in Bible reading has been questioned. Nothing

indeed could be more offensive than an excess in this direction. No devout believer would welcome even a tendency toward a revival of the "Passion Play," an example of which still lingers at Ober-Ammergau in Bavaria, where, once in ten years, the mysteries of Christ's suffering and death, are represented by several hundred performers after the mediæval style.

The Bible, however, is an oriental book, and in some of its scenes full of activity. Where it is possible to represent this feature justly, by the varied tones of the human voice, and the facial lines of the human face, other actions may be unnecessary. This result in many cases will be found to be practicable, where the spirit of the most vigorous passages has come, by conscientious study, to interfuse itself through the mental conceptions of the reader, and thus to possess his soul. Of Whitefield it was said "his face was like a canvas, upon it he painted every passion that stirs the human breast. It was at one moment terrific, as if all the furies were enthroned on that dark brow, and next, as by a dissolving view, there would come forth an angelic sweetness that savored of heaven." But Whitefield used abundant action in his impassioned oratory. Paul stretched forth the hand, an index gesture which affords warrant for the opinion that he employed other physical movements to assist his utterances. Read-

ing is speaking the thoughts of others, and while less freedom of action is expected than in the utterance of our own ideas, a judicious measure of it may be used at times, even in reading the Bible. In this, however, there will be necessary the exercise of a severely just spiritual taste, to avoid excess, and realize the highest standard of excellence. Professor McIlvaine, quoted in a previous chapter, makes the following discrimination between reading and speaking :—

"Reading is a more subdued and quiet, speaking a more full, and demonstrative form of elocution.

"This difference will be evident at once to any one who will compare the signs which each employs. For in reading the tones are naturally less full and strong, the range of pitch and inflection is less extended, there is less variation in time and force, the articulation is less hard and sharp, the emphasis is less decided, and the gesture, if any be allowed, is less marked and striking than in speaking. A reader in whom this quiet and subdued manner is wanting, who runs his reading into declamation, exhibits a want of taste, culture and refinement; whilst a speaker who simply reads his discourse, can exert but little power to impress his sentiments, or to inflame the audience with the emotions and passions which his words may be intended to express.

"Good reading is a more difficult form of elocution than good speaking. We should anticipate that this would be the case, from the nature of the distinction between reading and speaking; and this anticipation is confirmed by all experience and observation. To read well any passage or author with which we are wholly unacquainted, is confessedly a very difficult thing. Hence we find many good speakers, for one good reader. The reason of this is the direct opposition and incompatibility, between the mental operations of taking in the sense, and those of giving it out, at the same time. For although the former in reading do legitimately affect and modify the elocution, yet even in this case, if they become predominant in the consciousness of the reader, so as to overshadow and enfeeble the latter, the elocution is necessarily marred, or spoiled. The tendency to this is obviated, in some degree, by the great familiarity we attain with the forms, meanings and sounds of printed words, and by the wondrous perspicuity of the printed page, from which we are enabled to take in the sense as the eye passes over it, with but little conscious attention or effort. In this way, the leading mental operations in good reading, continue to be those of giving out, rather than those of taking in the sense. A good reader, however, never undertakes to read in public, a passage with which he is

wholly unacquainted, except from necessity; nor then does he ever expect to do justice to himself, or his author. He always tries to familiarize his mind before with the sentiments and words, in order to relieve himself as much as possible from the operations of taking in the sense, that he may be enabled to carry on these operations, in so far as they are indispensable, mostly as sub-processes, whilst his faculties are chiefly employed in the proper work of expression."

"The people of Verona, when they saw Dante on the streets, used to say: 'See, there is the man that was in hell!'"

"In Dante's purgatorio the whole mountain shakes with joy, and a psalm of praise rises, when one soul has perfected repentance, and got its misery left behind! I call this a noble embodiment of a true noble thought."

Thomas Carlyle.

"Thy voice is on the rolling air,
I hear thee where the waters run;
Thou standest in the rising sun,
And in the setting thou art fair."

Alfred Tennyson.

"Stay near me, do not take thy flight,
A little longer stay in sight:
Much converse do I find in thee,
Historian of my infancy:
Float near me; do not yet depart;
Dead times revive in thee;
Thou bringest, gay creature as thou art,
A solemn image to my heart."

Wordsworth (*To a Butterfly*).

CHAPTER VI.

IMAGINATION IN READING.

THE image-making faculty, which is a part of our mental endowment, may render most efficient service in private and public uses of the Bible. The scenes it portrays are remote, both geographically and in their time periods. The experiences it discloses, carry us into realities of spiritual life still more remote from our own. Imagination, both in its constructive and creative forms, must be called in to assist faith in its essay, to realize the facts thus given. Christian thinkers have been too shy and jealous in their treatment of this subtle and architectural faculty, which, when properly restricted, is always the fellow-helper of reason. Ever is it the advance courier of the latter, crossing with its cleaving wing the abyss first with its single thread, and thus making it possible for reason to follow later on with its cables, and finally with its solid bridge. "Surmise and aspiration" have led the way to the most startling discoveries in the field of modern investigation. In morals and science, as well as in poetry and art, the imagination is a co-worker with faith. Says a high modern authority in mental physiology:

"Even in the strictest of sciences, that of mathematics, it can be easily shown that no really great advance, such as the invention of Fluxions by Newton, and of the Differential Calculus by Leibnitz, can be made without the exercise of the imagination."

A fine example of the use of the imaginative faculty, in preparing the materials for a true inreading of some portions of Old Testament history, is furnished in Robert Browning's poem, "Saul." It is a profound psychological study of the experiences of the moody, irascible, heaven-deserted king of Israel, and of the conditions in the shepherd boy of Bethlehem, which enabled him to cast the spell of his harp-songs over the soul of his royal master. See with what consummate skill the constructive imagination works, in the conception of the themes which David recalls and gives to Saul, over the trembling chords of his harp. The whole extract is so excellent of its kind, that my page will be honored by giving it in full:—

"And I first played the tune all our sheep know, as, one after one,
So docile they come to the pen-door till folding be done.
They are white, and untorn by the bushes, for lo, they have fed
Where the long grasses stifle the water within the stream's bed;
And now one after one seeks its lodging, as star follows star
Into eve and the blue far above us,—so blue and so far!

Then the tune, for which quails on the cornland would
each leave his mate
To fly after the player ; then, what makes the crickets
elate
Till for boldness they fight one another : and then, what
has weight
To set the quick jerboa a-musing outside his sand house—
There are none such as he for a wonder, half bird and
half mouse !
God made all the creatures, and gave them our love and
our fear,
To give sign, we and they are His children, one family
here.

Then I played the help-tune of our reapers, their wine-
song, when hand
Grasps at hand, eye lights eye in good friendship, and
great hearts expand
And grow one in the sense of this world's life. And then,
the last song,
When the dead man is praised on his journey—'Bear,
bear him along,
With his few faults shut up like dead flowerets ! Are
balm seeds not here
To console us ? The land has none left such as he on the
bier.

Oh, would we might keep thee, my brother !' And then,
the glad chant
Of the marriage,—first go the young maidens, next,
she whom we vaunt
As the beauty, the pride of our dwelling. And then, the
great march
Wherein man runs to man to assist him, and buttress an
arch
Naught can break ; who shall harm them, our friends ?
Then, the chorus intoned
As the Levites go up to the altar in glory enthroned.
But I stopped here : for here in the darkness Saul
groaned."

The masterly delineation which follows, as

the processes of the mind of David, while gathering material to raise and calm the perturbed spirit of the king, are revealed, is an example of rare insight, clothed with equally rare felicity of expression. The culmination on Saul's part is when "he slowly resumes his old motions and habitudes kingly." On David's part, the poem reaches the summit of faith and longing, when through the mists of years he sees the truth of the incarnation, and says:—

"'Tis the weakness in strength that I cry for! my flesh, that I seek
In the Godhead! I seek and I find it. O Saul, it shall be
A Face like my face that receives thee; a Man like to me,
Thou shalt love and be loved by, forever: a Hand like this hand
Shall throw open the gates of new life to thee! See the Christ stand!"

If, at first flush, there seems to be in the closing portion of the piece an anachronism in conceiving David's mental difficulties respecting Saul's destiny, under modes of thought so modern, we may on reflection justify the poet's introduction of this conflict at this time, by sounding as best we are able, the depths of such Psalms as the eighth and fortieth, both ascribed to the sweet singer of Israel, the eighth written perhaps not far from the period of the incident elaborated by Browning. At any rate, the words of a late preacher, whose prose rose at times into the rhythmic measures of poetry, are true:—

"As to exactitudes, while the reason has hers, the imagation has hers, the only difference between them being this, that the exactitudes of the reason are formal, while the exactitudes of the imagination reach back to the spirit of things, and are the more profoundly exact on that account." The same affluent thinker has spoken in another place of the office of imagination in the preacher in these terms:—

"The imaginative man, and he only, is able to handle and draw out biblical doctrines historically; to take the Word, that is, in its entire historical setting. For the Word of God on theology is not an absolute utterance straight down from the skies, and direct from His lips, but it comes to us very circuitously through human lips, and many human lips, and through all sorts of human and earthly intermediates; and a full-visioned and creative grasp of those numerous intermediates is an essential part of good theologizing. When God would make Himself known in His fullness, He chose to be incarnated in the person of His eternal Son; that pre-existent and infinite Personage took upon Himself the conditions of time and sense; He dropped into an order of things historically prepared for Him by a long and laborious process, He became a vital factor in that order of things, He accepted all the relations prepared to His hand, spoke in a certain

language, for example, was of a certain country, dwelt on a certain spot, in a certain home, was nursed and cultured in a certain religion; and, in short, made His whole manifestation on earth a relational and conditional one, so that He cannot be fully understood in the least word He spoke, or in the least act He performed, except that He is interpreted by those conditions or relations in which He stood. We must resurrect His era, not only in its outline, but in all its essentials."

The Bible has arrived in our century like a ship richly-freighted from remote shores. Whatever criticism, conservative or destructive, may propose as to the Old Testament, history, psalm and prophecy are here with their "majesty and authority." The New Testament is in literature, and has been adopted by the incisive intellect and troubled heart of our time. We can but reverence the fact of the presence of such a book put into our hands, and requiring an explanation of itself from us. How did the men of the Bible get wing for those flights which leave us in the valley, with vision dimmed as we watch their eagle path, until they vanish behind the veil? How can we get the measure of the causes which wrought within the spirit of Moses, and which left their after-glow upon his face, as he came down from the mount? The Psalms of David,—did they grow from

the seed of human reflection? Out of what mental and spiritual antecedents did the rapt visions of Isaiah come?

Coming again to the New Testament, we find its pages suffused with the presence of the Son of Man, as the sunset cloud is suffused with the glory of the natural sun. The witnesses to His life and work who bear testimony in this book are few, but selected from a wide range of temperament, avocation and individuality. They are, however, alike, mastered by the imperial, yet lowly, personality of the Lord. They are themselves transformed within by this personality. There are latent, unsaid and necessarily reserved things, which they suggest by peculiar turns of expression, hinting of an infinite background which they cannot bring into view, and must leave unexplored. An example of this is given by the evangelist John, in the thirteenth chapter of his gospel:—

"Now before the feast of the passover, Jesus knowing that his hour was come that he should depart out of this world unto the Father, having loved his own which were in the world, he loved them unto the end. And during supper, the devil having already put into the heart of Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, to betray him, Jesus knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he came forth from God, and goeth unto God,

riseth from supper and layeth aside his garments; and he took a towel and girded himself."

What deep reaches of insight are revealed here, as in the hush of that eventide the beloved disciple, with long and loving gaze, followed His every movement, until the consummate deed of humility broke into his heart! Notice the large remainder of the unreportable in these words: "Jesus knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he was come from God and went to God." What softened light of holy trust, shedding a calm which was the seal of a Presence so near as to be awe-inspiring, was in the face which fixed the eyes of the apostle! Professor William Mathews says: "William Wirt, himself an orator, tells us that when the 'Blind Preacher of Virginia' drew a picture of the trial, crucifixion and death of our Saviour, there was such force and pathos in the description, that the original scene appeared to be, at that moment, acting before the hearers' eyes. 'We saw the very faces of the Jews: the staring, frightful distortions of malice and rage. We saw the buffet; my soul kindled with a flame of indignation, and my hands were involuntarily and convulsively clinched.' But when, with faltering voice, he came to touch on the patience, the forgiving meekness of the

Saviour, His prayer for the pardon of His enemies, 'the effect was inconceivable. The whole house resounded with the mingled groans and sobs and shrieks of the congregation.'"

In the popular historical fiction, "Ben Hur," there is a fine imaginative sketch of the effect of the death of Christ upon the multitude who were witnesses of the crucifixion. "Ben Hur went back to his friends saying, simply, 'It is over; He is dead.' In a space incredibly short the multitude was informed of the circumstance. No one repeated it aloud; there was a murmur which spread from the knoll in every direction; a murmur that was little more than a whispering, 'He is dead! He is dead!' and that was all. The people had their wish; the Nazarene was dead; yet they stared at each other aghast. His blood was upon them!

"And while they stood staring at each other the ground commenced to shake; each man took hold of his neighbor to support himself; in a twinkling the darkness disappeared, and the sun came out; and everybody, as with the same glance, beheld the crosses upon the hill all reeling drunken-like in the earthquake. They beheld all three of them; but the one in the center was arbitrary; it alone would be seen; and for that it seemed to extend itself upwards, and lift its burden, and swing it to

and fro higher and higher in the blue of the sky. And every man among them who had jeered at the Nazarene; every one who had struck Him; every one who had voted to crucify Him; every one who had marched in the procession from the city; every one who had in his heart wished Him dead, and they were as ten to one, felt that he was in some way individually singled out from the many, and that if he would live he must get away quickly as possible from that menace in the sky. They started to run; they ran with all their might; on horseback, and camels, and in chariots they ran, as well as on foot; but then, as if it were mad at them for what they had done, and had taken up the cause of the unoffending and friendless dead, the earthquake pursued them and tossed them about, and flung them down, and terrified them yet more by the horrible noise of great rocks grinding and rending beneath them. They beat their breasts and shrieked with fear. His blood was upon them! The home-bred and the foreign, priest and layman, beggar, Sadducee, Pharisee, were overtaken in the race, and tumbled about indiscriminately. If they called on the Lord, the outraged earth answered for Him in fury, and dealt with them all alike. It did not even know wherein the high-priest was better than his guilty brethren; overtaking him, it tripped

him up also, and smirched the fringing of his robe, and filled the golden bells with sand, and his mouth with dust. He and his people were alike in the one thing at least—the blood of the Nazarene was upon them all!"

"In the usual growth of plants, growing by leaves and buds on an ascending axis, it will be manifest that light from the *Zenith* will be most valuable."

Pres. Thos. Hill.

"If the sermons preached in our land during a single year, were all printed they would fill a hundred and twenty millions of octavo pages."

"Wherefore I give you to understand, that no man speaking in the spirit of God saith, Jesus is anathema; and no man can say Jesus is Lord, but in the Holy Spirit." 1 Cor. xii. 3.

"The man that looks on glass,
On it may stay his eye,
Or he may through it pass
And then the Heavens espy."

George Herbert.

CHAPTER VII.

THE DISPENSATION OF THE SPIRIT.

THE Duke of Wellington was once requested to give his personal impressions of the movements at the battle of Waterloo. He replied: "By reading the histories which have since been written, you will obtain a clearer idea of the battle than I had at the time." Our backward look upon the great movements of the kingdom, may give us more satisfactory ideas than it was possible for those who were the chief human actors in them to have. This, I take it, is especially true of the Pentecost. The interval between the day of resurrection and the day of the inauguration of the Dispensation of the Spirit, was a period of unusual bewilderment and doubt. The victorious coming out of the sepulchre was indeed a sunburst, following the gloomy eclipse of the crucifixion.

The total character of His relation to the disciples, during the forty days between the resurrection and ascension was unique, unprecedented. They were days of the tarrying of the Conqueror upon the field he had won. No sinners were warned from His lips during this period. He does not remain constantly with His disciples. His visits were excursive, occa-

sional. About five hundred assembled on the mount to receive His blessing. Obedient to His direction, one hundred and twenty of the number gathered together in an upper room in Jerusalem, in a condition of expectancy, such as has no parallel in human history. There was a significant waiting when the children of Israel watched for the return of Moses from the mount, or when they looked for the return of the spies from Canaan, or when they paused at the Jordan's side to see its waters part.

This waiting is separated from all these. It was a waiting with upturned faces for the coming upon them, and into them, of an abiding essential power. Ten days intervened between the ascension and the Pentecost. What days they were! There was apparently a pause in Heaven and on earth. His disciples were commanded not to work, but to wait; not to teach, but to tarry until they were imbued with power. Just how long they should pray, before the mighty answer should come, they could not tell. They waited and watched until, on the morning of the fiftieth day from the Great Day of Atonement, when "they were all with one accord in one place, suddenly there came a sound from Heaven, as of a rushing, mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting."

As a matter of fact there was no such insight into Christ's character and work before

the Pentecost, as subsequent to it. The calm after-look under the illumination of the Spirit, gave the disciples the key to the *spiritual* nature of His kingdom. Studied under this light, His words were understood in their proper meaning. To-day, words treasured in memory in childhood, on some occasion of special fervor, glow and burn, with meanings new and wondrously strange. The Spirit thus makes the Word a kaleidescope. It has a many-sided beauty and power; whichever way it is turned some new import breaks forth, some hidden feature of Christly grace and power is disclosed. Peter has definite ideas of the new kingdom after the outpouring of the Spirit. He beholds it as a kingdom of righteousness, and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit. The church is crystalized into clear outlines now. Somebody has said that Christmas was the birthday of Christ, but the Pentecost was the birthday of the Church. This birth was simply an investiture of each individual disciple with the affluence of the same Spirit which rested upon Christ Himself. Now there comes out the meaning of His own prayer, that the believer might be one with Himself. The glory given to Himself, even now He bestows upon those who follow Him. The Church thus became a *visible* body of Christ, Himself the head, His spiritual followers the members. The highest dignities conferred in the old dis-

pensation upon the priesthood, became the heritage of every believer, and remain to-day to be appropriated by each. *Now* the lowliest soul is an anointed King and Priest unto God.

Privileges of access denied in the old dispensation to all, save an authorized few, are now made universal as the believer's wants. The rending of the temple veil, is seen now in its proper significance. To the Priest officiating during the last scene of the tragedy of the cross, the event must have been one of startling interest. The sacred curtain which hid the most holy place from common gaze, quivers for a moment, and then rends from the top to the bottom. The mercy-seat lies open. Lo! a highway, clear and unobstructed, is disclosed for every believer. The words and acts of the Lord Jesus Christ even yet take on new meanings, under the perpetual dispensation of the Spirit. Who can tell whether we have yet the true import of all His wonderful life? In the fierce alembic of modern criticism, that life grows greater, grander every day. The *hearts* of men yearn toward it, as never before. Its power to satisfy and fill the soul, is to set society into a movement of inquiry unparalleled in interest. This movement will be conducted by the Holy Spirit. To work towards Christ, to handle His grace and glory before the eyes of men,—this is His exclusive work. And this furnishes an infallible test of His presence

within us. When we are drawn more to Christ's career, when His words are brought to us with increasing sweetness, when His life rises as a vision of entrancing joy before us, moving us to imitation, then the Spirit is with us. The Spirit is silent upon those themes which might divert us from Christ. He pours day upon whatever is vital, essential to us here and now. Other and transcendent subjects are held in the circle of the Spirit's infinite knowledge. His very silence upon these is suggestive. The marvel of the great truth-realms which border on us here, we shall have ample leisure to study hereafter. *Now* a vital crisis impends. We are sore, broken and needy. Christ is the physician, and the church the hospital for all souls. To these the Spirit directs, gathering with exclusive constancy and perseverance, the thought and feeling of man to the help he needs. It has been justly said, while the scientific researches of Sir Humphrey Davy put him in the front rank of scientific men, a single invention for the saving of life, placed him among the greatest benefactors of the race. The safety-lamp has preserved thousands of lives. The great facts of science he developed, have delighted thousands of minds. So the glorious utilities of the Spirit's truth-showing, commend Him to our gratitude and love. All Heaven moves toward us, for the saving of our imperilled lives.

The day of Pentecost marks the introduction of the era of declaration by the human tongue. In the temple there was properly no pulpit. The Priest was indeed a teacher of the law, but this was not his conspicuous work. His was the trained eye and the skilled hand, to "rightly divide" the slain-offering. He must be vigilant over the altar fire, that it be kept ever burning,—above all he was the typical mediator between God and man. The Prophet was an instructor and reprover of the people. Standing out apart from all castes, and independent alike of tribes and priests, he was the protestant of his time, raised up to be the immediate organ of Jehovah in the exigencies of the history of the chosen people. The completion of the Atonement by the Lamb of God, was the hinge of dispensation,—"the turn of the morning," in our race history. On this account the Babylonian veil, which hung between the compartments of the temple proper, was rent from the top to the bottom by an invisible hand; and the Holy Spirit came in person to abide in the church to the end of the age. We do well to emphasize the import of the chosen symbol of the Paraclete. "There appeared unto the disciples, tongues parting asunder like as of fire; and it sat upon each of them." The period of declaration, of speaking, witnessing, teaching, had come, because the content of redemption was now made known.

Along with the unfolding of the new, varied, and surprising subject-matter of Christ's person and deeds, came an irrepressible impulse to make it known. The disciples descended from the upper room at Jerusalem, to put themselves in immediate contact with the multitude, by witnessing to the fact of a risen and glorified Lord. The Sanhedrim saw that their policy must be to suppress speech, if they would arrest the propagation of the new faith. With the circle of Christian truth completed, and with the record of it in our hands, the church is summoned to her declarative office until the Lord comes. She must declare, in order to organize, and then she must organize, that she may again declare. In just the *measure* that she has failed in public uses of the Bible, in connection with "the bread of holy preaching," in just that measure has she failed in her specific mission to men.

A new energy in speech was imparted by the advent of the Holy Spirit. Incomes of original truth were made known, through the inworking of a searching and interpreting Person dwelling in believers, so that they spoke out of depths into depths. They were mentally and spiritually in a mighty "stream of tendency," proceeding from the Father and the Son, and were carried by it into modes of speech, which differed from both Jewish prophet and Greek philosopher. They were

unlike the old prophets in the amplitude, and after the first shock of Pentecost, the calmness of their testimony. They differed from the Greek orator in that they passed behind the art of the rhetorician, into life theories, which would in due time appropriate all that was true in this art from within,—and thus the faith of the listener would stand in the power of God, and not in the wisdom of men. The temporary charisms were to disappear, as the scaffolding is removed when the structure is completed. But the union of the Spirit and the Word in the utterances of human speech, was to continue. The reader of the Bible who knows the Divine investiture which is peculiar to the present dispensation, occupies a position quite above that of the orator or lecturer, while he uses leverages common to both. He will instruct and move, but he will penetrate and quicken; he will change and elevate, but he will lodge in human minds, forces which will reverse the motives, and qualify for a new life before men. The convert in turn, thus becomes a living epistle clothed with flesh and blood, written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God.

The new capacity for declaration comes now upon all souls. Both sons and daughters prophesy. Young men see visions, and old men dream dreams,—the living tide flows over all flesh, and servants and handmaidens share

in the largess of the ascension gift. Woman is included in the call to read the Word. Since Elizabeth Fry, "the female Howard," whose maxim was, "charity to the soul is the soul of charity," stood in Newgate prison with her open Bible, and with the loving tones of her voice, interpreted its promises to the prisoner, this call has not been widely questioned. Christian women to-day are reading the old messages of the Word to the poor and desolate, in our large Eastern cities, and in the cities of Great Britain. Is not this new dispensation especially favorable in the opportunity it brings to woman, to read the Word at home, in social gatherings, and to the destitute?

Woman, as a theologian, is yet to interpret the heart of God, as man has never done. No worship of the virgin had been possible, if woman had with trained powers studied our Divine Christ, to find what was there to be found, motherhood, as well as the strength and robustness of man. The contributions of her thought, to this and other subjects we may wait for with the most hopeful interest.

We have too much panegyric of the Bible, a kind of irrational glorification, which overlooks the merit which has given it its prestige. Not because councils have approved it, but because *it deserves to endure* is its high place maintained.

It has latent, undiscovered resources which keep

it not simply abreast of the time, but in its possible disclosures, in advance of it. The course of thought through the Bible, has been like the movement of discovery and emigration, over the natural world. Man has not yet discovered the world, much less occupied it. He has only seen its superficies, outlined its bolder, salient features. So in God's word, there are probably truth-realms, unvisited by human thought. There are chapters in the Book of Revelation which seem like rocky fastnesses, which no human foot has ever pressed. The best students of it, have been most modest in their estimates of the extent of their knowledge of it.

Before John Robinson and his flock left Leyden to plant Bible-seed in the New World, he said: "The Lord has more truth to break yet out of His Holy Word." You say this required no prophetic insight. It was simply to accept our Master's teaching, respecting the office work of the Holy Spirit. He, the Spirit of God, was to "take of the things of Christ, and show them unto us." But these "things" are in the written Word. They are to be brought out as we receive the Spirit, to stimulate thought, and put us upon search for them. We know of few things more vitiating in our common instruction, than the idea that the truth of the Word of God may be got with no effort. Truth enough to save the soul, we admit, lies upon its surface. But that which

enlarges and exalts us, that which we would build into the new institutions of a comprehensive world-influencing civilization, comes by pains-taking study. We are to investigate it as men do the heavens, waiting out the vigils of the night, to witness the coming of some remote star. So will new seals be broken, as the ripening needs of men require them. So will new sense, new uses issue forth from the words which are already familiar to us. We are ushered into strangely new experiences, at times, when favorable conditions let us into new interpretations of old texts, which we have kept in the chambers of memory since childhood.

You may examine under a powerful microscope cell-germs, which are hidden in all their beauty and suggestiveness, from the natural eye. So the soul gets helps to its natural vision, in studying the Word of God, and new wonders stand disclosed before it. Next to the Spirit of God and the moral nature of man, we take it, *science* is to be the chief auxiliary in interpreting the *Bible*. There is a grim old worker abroad in the earth. Sometimes he delves among the rocks, spelling out the handwriting on the stony page. Again he sits over the crucible to detect the affinities of matter. Then he studies with wondering interest, the structure of the human body, bringing the secrets of its mechanism to light.

Despite all the attempts to make him the antagonist of the Bible, he will be found to have worked always for it. Take, to drop the figure, the influence which science is now having upon the doctrine of the personality of God. The keenest analysis into causes, finds a point beyond which it cannot go. It demands a cause no less than God, and the Bible lays open His character as a person. He makes our need, His care, numbering the hairs of our head, and comforting us in all our sorrow. A true science will never drive God out of the world He has made. It will rather connect Him in all that He exhibits Himself to be in nature, with what He declares Himself to be in His Word. So we believe science will confirm the conscious need we have, of a Divine Helper and Saviour. It cannot ignore the dis-harmonies of nature. It must interpret the groaning of the whole creation as an outcry for Christ.

But, lastly, the Bible must remain our text-book, because its law of love can never be superseded. It is a finality. The golden rule executed, would bring in the brotherhood of all men. Our hope for it, is in the Bible; not the Bible on the shelf, but in the best translation of it ever made. We mean, that which is made in human hearts and lives. Thus translated, its mightiest victories are yet to be won. Going forth to distribute it, with hearts

surcharged with its spirit, may God help us to inaugurate the day of its complete triumph, when "the light of the moon shall be as the light of the sun, and the light of the sun shall be seven-fold, as the light of seven days."

"Nay all speech, even the commonest speech, has something of song in it: not a parish in the world but has its parish accent;—the rhythm or tune to which the people there sing what they have to say! Accent is a kind of chaunting; all men have accent of their own, though they only notice that of others. Observe, too, how all passionate language does of itself become musical, with a finer music than the mere accent; the speech of a man even in zealous anger becomes a chaunt, a song."

Thomas Carlyle.

"Many of the supposed inconsistencies of the Bible, arise from a different method of logic and rhetoric in the Oriental writers, and the attempts of modern scholars to measure them by Occidental methods. Many of the inconsistencies result from the neglect to appreciate the poetic and imaginative element in the Bible, and a lack of æsthetic sense on the part of the interpreters."

Chas. A. Briggs, D. D.

"All these things Jesus spake in parables unto the multitudes; and without a parable spake he nothing unto them." Matt. xiii. 34.

CHAPTER VIII.

LITERARY STRUCTURE OF THE BIBLE.

THE breaking up of the subject-matter of the Bible into chapters and verses, has in many instances the effect of a commentary upon it. Conceding its value for easy reference and quotation, it must be said that the continuity of thought is abruptly broken by it in some cases, and that the illogical divisions made, tax and confuse the mind of the common reader.

The Canterbury version has in some measure, obviated this obnoxious feature by restoring the paragraph arrangement, and inserting the chapter and verse divisions in the margin. Historically, the separation into chapters dates back to the thirteenth century, and is attributed to Stephen Langton, Archbishop of Canterbury. The present verse-divisions differ in origin in the Old and New Testaments. In the Canonical Old Testament they go back to the obscurity of the Masoretic division of the Hebrew Bible. They are as old as the ninth century, though not used generally for citation until the thirteenth century. The verses of the New Testament now in use, were introduced by Robert Stephens in his

Greek Latin Testament of 1551. His son Henry, in the preface to his Greek Concordance published in 1594, relates that this division was made by his father in a journey from Paris to Lyons, and a great part of it on horse-back. The work of unauthorized individuals must have had some merits, to have gained so ready and so wide acceptance. It facilitates citation, and assists in the comparison of Scripture with Scripture. It is thus helpful in the building of the sermon, which is a methodically-arranged comment upon the subordinate unities of statement, which make up the total body of revealed truth.

In its internal structure as a literary production, the Bible presents more diversified forms of composition than any other book. It is divided generally into prose and poetry, but under this latter classification are many subdivisions not yet fully recognized, much less analyzed. Out of its prose portions, like springs by the wayside, there bubble up single poems which refresh and delight the student. The first specimen of these, perhaps the oldest little poem in the world, is found in the fourth chapter of Genesis, from the twenty-third to the twenty-fifth verses inclusive. The revised version renders it as follows:—

"Adah and Zillah, hear my voice;
Ye wives of Lamech, hearken unto my speech:
For I have slain a man for wounding me,

And a young man for bruising me :
If Cain shall be avenged sevenfold,
Truly Lamech seventy and sevenfold."

What has been called the "Song of the Well," in the book of Numbers, xxi. chapter, 17, 18 verses, is another illustration of the wayside springs of the Scripture.

"Spring up, O well ; sing ye unto it :
The well, which the princes digged,
Which the nobles of the people delved,
With the sceptre, and with their staves."

A skillful translation of some of the Psalms, revealing the different relations of the members of the piece, affords great help in the understanding of their import. By designating the different speakers in the second Psalm, as given in the revised version, it takes on new meanings and fresh interest.

The Psalmist
Why do the nations rage,
And the peoples meditate a vain thing?
The kings of the earth set themselves,
And the rulers take counsel together,
Against Jehovah, and against his anointed,
saying,

The people
Let us break their bonds asunder,
And cast away their cords from us.

The Psalmist
He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh :
The Lord shall have them in derision.
Then shall he speak unto them in his wrath,
And vex them in his sore displeasure :

Jehovah
Yet I have set my king
Upon my holy hill of Zion.

The Son
I will tell of the decree :
Jehovah said unto me, Thou art my son ;
This day have I begotten thee.
Ask of me, and I will give thee the nations
for thine inheritance,
And the uttermost parts of the earth for
thy possession.
Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron ;
Thou shalt dash them in pieces like a pot-
ter's vessel.

The Psalmist
Now therefore be wise, O ye kings:
Be instructed, ye judges of the earth.
Serve Jehovah with fear,
And rejoice with trembling.
Kiss the son, lest he be angry, and ye perish in the way,
For his wrath will soon be kindled.
Blessed are all they that take refuge in him.

Prof. Charles A. Briggs, in his "Biblical Study," introduces a translation of the first act of the "Song of Songs" in dramatic form. The first and second scenes are as follows:—

"Scene I.

Solo. Let him kiss me with some kisses of his mouth,
For thy caresses are better than wine;
For scent thine ointments are excellent;
O thou sweet ointment, poured forth as to thy name!
Therefore the virgins love thee.
Solo. Oh! Draw me!
Chorus. After thee we will run!
Solo. O that the king had brought me to his apartment!
Chorus. We will rejoice and we will be glad with thee,
We will celebrate thy caresses more than wine.
Rightly they love thee.

Scene II.

Shulamite. Dark am I—
Chorus. —but lovely—
Shulamite. —daughters of Jerusalem, as the tents of Kedar.
Chorus. —as the curtains of Solomon.
Sh. Gaze not upon me because I am swarthy,
Because the sun scanned me:
My mother's sons were angry with me,
They set me as keeper of the vineyards;
My vineyard, which is my own, have I not kept.

O tell me, thou whom my soul loveth :
Where feedest thou thy flock ?
Where dost thou let them couch at noon ?
Why should I be, as one straying
After the flocks of thy companions ?
Ch. If thou knowest not of thyself, thou fairest among women,
Go forth for thyself at the heels of the flock,
And feed thy kids at the tabernacles of the shepherds."

The same author has added to the original investigations of Bishop Lowth, respecting the fundamental principles of the structure of Hebrew poetry. The three kinds of parallelism found in this poetry by Lowth, were first, synonymous, of which the first verses of the nineteenth Psalm furnish an example.

"The heavens declare the glory of God ;
And the firmament showeth his handywork.
Day unto day uttereth speech,
And night unto night showeth knowledge."

Second, antithetical, of which the book of Proverbs gives numerous illustrations. Proverbs, xiii. chapter, 1–5 verses, contains four definite antithetical propositions.

"A wise son heareth his father's instruction :
But a scorner heareth not rebuke.
A man shall eat good by the fruit of his mouth :
But the soul of the treacherous shall eat violence.
He that guardeth his mouth keepeth his life :
But he that openeth wide his lips shall have destruction.
The soul of the sluggard desireth, and hath nothing :
But the soul of the diligent shall be made fat."

The third form is the synthetic, of which

Psalm cxlviii., 7, 8, furnishes an illustration.

> "Praise Jehovah from the earth,
> Ye dragons, and all deeps:
> Fire and hail, snow and vapor;
> Stormy wind, fulfilling his word."

Professor Briggs' analysis of the strophe in Hebrew poetry is as follows:—

"The strophe is to the poem, what the lines of verses are, in relation to one another in the system of parallelism. They are composed of a greater or lesser number of lines, sometimes equal, and sometimes unequal. Where there is a uniform flow of the emotion, the strophes will be composed of the same number of lines, and will be as regular in relation to one another, as the lines of which they are composed; but where the emotion is agitated by passion, or broken by figures of speech, or abrupt in transitions, they will be irregular and uneven. The strophes are subject to the same principles of parallelism, as the lines themselves, and are thus either synonymous to one another, antithetical, or progressive, in those several varieties of parallelism already mentioned."

He presents, as the finest specimen of poetry in the Old Testament, the section beginning with the thirteenth verse of the fifty-second chapter of Isaiah, and embracing all the following chapter; the whole constituting a prophetic delineation of Messiah's sacri-

ficial work. The arrangement of the strophes is so clear, and the cumulative effect of reading aloud, made so conspicuous by reason of it, that it is reproduced as a whole here.

(1) "Behold my servant shall prosper,
He shall be lifted up and be exalted and be very high.
According as many were astonished at thee—
So disfigured more than a man was his appearance,
And his form than the sons of men ;—
So shall he startle many nations ;
Because of him kings will stop their mouths ;
For what had not been told them they shall see,
And what they had not heard they shall attentively consider.

(2) "Who believed our message,
And the arm of Jehovah, unto whom was it revealed?
When he grew up as a suckling plant before us,
And as a root out of a dry ground ;
He had no form and no majesty that we should see him,
And no appearance that we should take pleasure in him ;
Despised and forsaken of men !
A man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief !
And as one before whom there is a hiding of the face !
Despised, and we regarded him not !

(3) "Verily our griefs *he* bore,
And our sorrows—*he* carried them.
But *we* regarded him as stricken,
Smitten of God, and humbled.
But *he* was one pierced because of our transgressions,
Crushed because of our iniquities ;
The chastisement for our peace was upon him ;
And by his stripes there is healing for us.
We all like sheep strayed away ;
Each one turned to his own way.
While Jehovah caused to light on him the iniquity of us all.

(4) "He was harassed while he was humbling himself,
And he opens not his mouth;
Like a sheep that is being led to the slaughter,
And as an ewe that before her shearers is dumb;—
And he opens not his mouth.
From oppression and from judgment he was taken away,
And among his cotemporaries who was considering,
That he was cut off from the land of the living,
Because of the transgression of my people, one smitten for them?
With the wicked his grave was assigned,
But he was with the rich in his martyr death;
Because that he had done no violence,
And there was no deceit in his mouth.

(5) "But *Jehovah* was pleased to crush him with grief!
When he himself offers a trespass offering,
He shall see a seed, he shall prolong days;
And the pleasure of Jehovah will prosper in his hands:
On account of his own travail he shall see;
He shall be satisfied with his knowledge;
My righteous servant shall justify many,
And their iniquities *he* shall carry.
Therefore will I give him a portion consisting of the many;
And with the strong shall he divide spoil,
Because that he exposed himself to death,
And he was numbered with transgressors,
And *he* did bear the sin of many;
And for transgressors was suffering infliction."

The literary form of the New Testament presents less variety than the Old. It has nevertheless considerable variety of structure. It has been said "the songs of Elizabeth and Zacharias breathe the spirit of the Hebrew poets, and are largely expressed in language

derived from them." Attention has also been directed to various quotations in the New Testament of poetical portions of the Old. Mr. Joseph B. Rotherham, author of the emphasized version of the New Testament, makes the following claim respecting the structure of the fourth gospel, incidentally alluding to the Epistle to the Hebrews in the same connection.

"Everywhere throughout this most admirable composition a beautiful rhythm prevails; not rolling in ample waves and rising in lofty crests, as in the Epistle to the Hebrews, but flowing in gentle ripples, or heaving in measured swells; coinciding with the earlier and bolder strokes of logical priority, but at the end of clauses and sentences, not infrequently counteracting the nicer effects of slight preplacement, causing thereby a balanced ending, or drawing a perceptible weight to the closing word. The result is, that while the stronger indications of emphasis remain undisturbed, the slighter signs of it are occasionally overruled: sometimes the last word but one retains the stress; sometimes the last word wins it; and sometimes, not very seldom perhaps, the result is a tie or balance, a distribution or emphasis, which comes quite naturally to the living voice, imparting merely a deliberate fullness to the ending. The perception of this delicate feature has grown upon me, in revision."

The sixteenth verse closing the third chapter of the first Epistle to Timothy, is regarded as the fragment of a hymn. It is given in the words of the revised New Testament as follows:

"And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness; He who was manifested in the flesh, justified in the spirit, seen of angels, preached among the nations, believed on in the world, received up in glory."

The article on Hebrew Poetry in Smith's Bible Dictionary, says: "Not a few of Paul's sentences which we are accustomed to read as prose, bring back to the ear the cadence of Hebrew verse. The following is an example of this.

(2 Timothy ii. 11.)

"For if we died with him,
We shall also live with him:
If we endure, we shall also reign with him:
If we shall deny him,
He will also deny us:
If we are faithless, he remaineth faithful;
For he cannot deny himself."

It is quite evident that along these lines of exploration, especially in the New Testament literature, there remains very much land to be possessed.

"The lungs are capable of great development. A considerable portion of the air-cells of which they are composed, are not commonly, even in perfectly healthy persons, brought into use; that is, they are not expanded or filled with air in respiration, but they lie in a collapsed state; and those moreover which are utilized are not expanded to their utmost capacity. By proper exercises the former class are brought into use, and the latter increased in size and capacity." *Prof. J. H. McIlvaine.*

"Take care of the consonants, and the vowels will take care of themselves." *J. M. Bellew.*

"The French books on the voice call our nasality an infirmity, and classify it with lisping and stammering. They say it is congenital, and is sometimes produced by an injury to the brain or a defect in the organs of speech. Their nasality is the real one. They really do sing through their noses. Our nasal passage is closed while we produce the misnamed nasal sounds."

Prof. Nathan Sheppard.

CHAPTER IX.

THE PHYSICAL FACTOR.

PROF. MATHEWS, the author of "Orators and Oratory," has said that "*force* is partly a physical product, and partly mental. It is the electrical element; that which smites, penetrates and thrills."

Every thoughtful preacher desires to know how to speak forcibly, and how to reach the physical conditions essential in the case. The purpose of the present chapter will be to treat of the physical factor, in the specific work of preaching. The capacity to stand up and declare God's Word clearly and effectively, is sometimes a gift, coming unbidden to certain chosen men. It is more frequently the result of severe discipline and wise training, in which, connected with a Divine call, an investiture of the Holy Spirit, and patient investigation of truth, the bodily conditions play an important part.

The physical training for preaching must, as a matter of course, be special. We do not need the brawn and muscle of prize-fighters, in order to speak with power in the weekly duty of the pulpit. Dio Lewis, M. D., makes a just discrimination between health and

strength. A well man may not be strong; and, vice versa, a strong man may not be well. He says: "I have a friend who can lift nine hundred pounds, and yet is an habitual sufferer from torpid liver, rheumatism, and low spirits. The cartmen of our cities, who are our strongest men, are far from being the healthiest class, as physicians will testify. On the contrary, I have many friends who would stagger under three hundred pounds, that are in capital trim."

A delicate, unmuscular man may, by prudent use of his vital resources, preach effectively. In order to do so he must, as a matter of conscience, *reserve* physical strength for the time he spends on his feet before the people, sufficient to drive his thoughts home. The preacher who comes into his pulpit physically exhausted, must not complain of the mental torpor of his hearers. As audiences go, they require awakening. They do not, as a rule, come to the sanctuary in a state of quick susceptibility to impression. The preacher, as divinely aided, must bring on this condition; and if the Spirit works through thought-power, its manifestations will depend, in great measure, upon the condition of the physical organism. It is true we are marvelously helped at times when the body seems weak, but this succor comes through an empowering of the whole man—body, mind and spirit.

As every man is a law to himself, each preacher should decide wisely as to the proportion of time, to be given to study and physical exercise. No vigor of bodily state will compensate for commonplace thought in the pulpit. "The lean and flashy" talk is not transmuted into the bread of life by good physical conditions. "The hungry sheep look up, and are not fed."

On the other hand, how many thoroughly prepared sermons fall dead, because the man forgot he was a *preacher* as well as a student and a writer! The lawyer is kept up to a condition of physical alertness, by the presence of a vigilant and wary antagonist. The preacher lacks this kind of stimulus, but he should be keenly alive to the necessity of capturing the mental capability of his hearers. The sustained vigilance necessary to secure this result will be wanting, if he brings a jaded mind and body into the pulpit.

We raise no issue here between written and unwritten discourses. Written sermons, delivered under good bodily conditions, carry weight and conviction, sometimes wanting in freer addresses. Edwards read closely, and so do some of the best modern preachers. The audiences who were entranced under the preaching of Chalmers, never raised any objections to his use of manuscripts.

This only is required, that the man shall

divide himself wisely between his study and his pulpit.

The kind and degree of physical exercise best adapted to equip the preacher for the pulpit, will also vary in each case. Samuel Hopkins says quaintly of Edwards: "In the winter he was wont, almost daily, to take an axe, and chop wood moderately for the space of half an hour or more." A Boston pastor pleads for a carpenter's bench and tools in a house, as affording at once recreation, and as having practical utility. He inquires, "Is it not a little discreditable to a well-educated man to have to send for a mechanic, when anything is out of order in the house? Ought we not to be able to ease a door, make a shelf, stop a leak in a leaden pipe, milk a cow, harness our own horse? An hour spent in such work about the house or stable, every day, would not only exercise the body, but relieve the tension of a student's brain."

After trying a considerable variety of gymnastic exercises, the writer must add his testimony from experience, to the superior advantage of simply walking, say five or six miles at a stretch, once or twice a week. This, in connection with the daily exercise of pastoral work, has been found sufficient, with a wise use of Saturday, to keep the body in good condition for Sunday work in the pulpit.

Montaigne says: "Our work is not to train

a soul by itself alone, nor a body by itself alone, but to train a man; and in man, soul and body can never be divided."

The prejudice against "Schools of Oratory," and the aversion which is felt with reference to the itinerant elocutionist, are not destitute of justifying reasons. There is, notwithstanding, a legitimate and vastly remunerative culture of the vocal powers. Its benefits are not limited to the organs of speech, but wise voice-building, has in some instances, affected general physical conditions in a most salutary way. It would surprise some people who have never tried it, to discover the effect upon their own ease in speaking, of simply reading aloud for one hour daily.

The brunt of the difficulty in regard to preaching, in many cases certainly, is the fact of its *infrequency*. Most of us could speak with greater facility *every day*, than once or twice a week. The vocal organs are subjected to a heavy tax one day in seven, while they are suffered to remain unused, for the major part of the interval between Sabbaths. Now the vigor, flexibility and volume of the voice depend upon practice, and that not spasmodically, but methodically and frequently. Von Bulow, the great pianist, is reported as saying: "If I quit the piano one day, I notice it; if I quit it two days, my *friends* notice it; if I quit it three days, the *public* notice it."

Daily prolonged reading aloud, would furnish that regular exercise of the vocal organs, which would enable many speakers who feel over-fatigued by reason of the Sunday strain, to tide over the day without it. If they were to include in the exercise, the portion of Scripture to be read in worship, together with the hymns to be sung, the congregation could hardly fail to participate in the benefit.

Skilled work in this particular phase of pulpit service, is as conspicuously distinguished from unskilled, as in any other place, in or out of the pulpit. Besides the vocal mastery of Scripture lessons, there are other advantages to be gained by the practice mentioned. By reading aloud such noble and stimulating productions as Milton's "Comus" and "Lycidas," Wordsworth's "Ode to Immortality," Tennyson's "In Memoriam," and others likely to come to mind, until they become familiar, one would possess a rare store of healthy and vigorous thoughts, clothed in felicitous and chaste English.

A late writer on elocution, quotes Lord Stanhope's reply to the question, as to what he ascribed the two qualities for which his eloquence was conspicuous—namely, the lucid order of his reasoning, and the ready choice of his words. He said, "he believed he owed the former to an early study of Aristotelian logic, and the latter, to his father's practice of

making him, every day after reading over to himself some passage in the classics, translate it aloud and continuously into English prose." The vigorous reading of our English classics would enrich the vocabulary of a preacher, to a degree scarcely less than the exercise of translation mentioned above.

The dreary monotone not only puts the hearer into a non-receptive attitude, in spite of his will, but is a damaging abuse of the voice, because a departure from the law of its structure. The latter renders it capable of great flexibility, range and compass of tone. It has been asserted (and we think with reason), that "even persons who are unaffected by music, are often subdued by the gentle accents of the voice, or roused by its deep intonations."

An apostle exhorts believers to "let their moderation be known to all men." Many a public speaker would find his efficiency greatly increased, could he let his *modulation* be known to all his hearers. All the rich varieties of emphasis, inflection and tone are impossible in monotonous speech. Indeed, it puts an injunction on the very power of thought itself, by clothing it in a stilted and unnatural sameness.

A clergyman now widely known as a preacher of power, told the writer the secret of his own recovery from the monotonous habit of his early life. Once, in the middle of

a sermon which he was delivering in a high, unbroken key, he had occasion to stop and ask the sexton to close a door. He made the request in a natural, modulated tone, and was struck by the contrast between it and his preaching. He took the hint, and adopted afterwards, little by little as he could master it, a more flexible speech in public discourse.

There are sources of disability in speaking, in which unnatural *breathing* is the chief thing to be obviated. Without full chest inspirations, the physical effort of speaking, even for a half hour, will be ordinarily attended with fatigue. To remove this difficulty one needs the advice of a competent instructor, and sometimes no little training.

The Master commends vacations when He says to the tired disciples, "Come ye yourselves apart into a desert place and rest awhile." The apostles broke the strain of continuous labor. Sometimes by detention in prisons, or forced absences in perils by sea, it was broken for them.

In our period, with its mental alertness, with its incalculable spoil of knowledge, won from earth and air and sea, with the strain of its social problems, with its intrepid valor of faith, and its shameless boldness in sin, the man who stands in the arena for Christ, will, if he be wise, withdraw himself betimes, and put himself in sympathy with unwonted scenes

and unusual experiences. Reasons, physical and social, mental and spiritual, combine to commend the wisdom of vacations.

The suggestion in the receipt of Mrs. Glass for "cooking a hare" is, "first catch your hare." We are of the opinion that in the matter of vacations, it is frequently easier to obtain one, than to decide how to utilize it most profitably. There are a few general ideas which we venture to state in regard to their uses.

The special use of vacations should vary with felt physical and mental needs at the time of its occurrence. The writer remembers a vacation, the first week of which was spent chiefly in sleep. The requirements of an overtaxed mind were met in this way, and the balance and elasticity of the system restored. In other conditions, a change in activities is better than rest. Some vacations have yielded never-to-be-forgotten benefits in the opportunities afforded for reading books, which could not be examined during the pressure of regular pastoral and preaching service. The Concord Philosopher says, "In the common experience of the scholar the weather fits his moods. A thousand tunes the variable wind plays, a thousand spectacles it brings, and each is the frame or dwelling of a new spirit. I used formerly to choose my time with some nicety, for each favorite book. There are days when

the great are near us, when there is no frown on their brow, no condescension even; when they take us by the hand, and we share their thoughts. There are days which are the carnival of the year. The angels assume flesh, and repeatedly become visible."

Then there are other favored intervals when the purse permits travel, and other circumstances conspire to make it feasible. The writer has twice visited Europe, the first time to see old places, rich in historical associations and their venerable structures; the second time to see living men, trained under disciplines, sharply in contrast with our own. How affluent in enduring results, and how perennially fruitful in material for his work, has he found both these select and happy tours over sea! Another year brought another opportunity. Two weeks were added to the vacation month, and six weeks occupied in a visit to the "Wonderland" of the world, the Yellowstone National Park. The great wheat-belt of Dakota was traversed, then came the ranch country, with the "cow- boys" and the "Bad Lands," and the Crow Indian reservation, all en route, and each one furnishing interest enough for an ordinary respite from labor.

Finally came the Park itself, with its lakes of fire, its marvelous geysers, and, crowning all, the unique and majestic cañon of the Yellowstone River, with its miles of rainbows

set in the everlasting rock. Such experiences as were crowded into the six weeks of midsummer must, we think, last a lifetime in their refreshing and stimulating results. It was simply re-juvenescence, re-creation, in the highest import yielded by these terms.

And all this in our own country, the scene within easy reach, and not of necessity requiring great outlay of money. Besides the uplifting effect of contact with the noblest natural scenery, there were opportunities to study specific phases of our national life, to enter the settler's cabin on the prairie's edge, and to get some just impressions of the extent of our national domain. The breath of those great uplands stretching toward the setting sun, is an inspiration still, and will remain so in years to come.

If some reader should say this journey is simply impracticable in my case, it remains for him to find new fields for exploration nearer. These notes are being written in the State of Connecticut. A former chief magistrate has recently called attention, in eloquent words, to the variety and beauty of its natural scenery. The railroads are rendering us oblivious to the rare and frequently unrecognized natural resources of the country nearest to us. Within a few hours ride of any pastor, living in New England or New York, are the White Mountains, the Adirondacks, and the

Catskills, not to mention many places of lesser note, full of wild and picturesque interest. Along our extensive coast-line also are how many desirable resting places "down by the sea."

Whether by reading, or by the noble study of object lessons afforded by travel, the pastor's vacation should be a gathering time. He should aim not simply to get rest, but to increase his resources. The people give him warmest welcome when he brings to them, with his freshly-bronzed face, new impressions of nature, or new views of men, to be used in his work of instruction. No better advice has been given on the uses of travel, than is contained in Lord Bacon's well chosen words: "When a traveller returneth home, let his travel appear rather in his discourse, than in his apparel or gesture, and in his discourse, let him be rather advised in his answers, than forward to tell stories; and let it appear that he doth not change his country manners for those of foreign parts, but only prick in some flowers of that he hath learned abroad, into the customs of his own country."

"He throve equally well upon the dialogues of Plato, and the hymns of Zinzendorf, upon the Monadologie of Leibnitz, and Spener's Faith which makes Happy."

Translator's Preface to Dorner's System of Christian Doctrine.

"John Foster, in his profoundly thoughtful and wholesomely suggestive essay, entitled, 'The Aversion of Men of Taste for Evangelical Religion,' assigns as one reason for that hostile sentiment, operative in the case of the majority of cultivated men, the influence of early education in schools where it is presumable, that so large a share of the most impressible period of youth was devoted to the ancient classic authors, with their pagan ideas of morals and religion. Read Foster's solemnly eloquent words, and consider how much it is incumbent on parents and teachers to do, to counteract the insensible, insidious influence of such an immersion and saturation, of the young mind and conscience and heart, in an atmosphere of thought and representation, so alien and hostile to the spirit of Christianity."

W. C. Wilkinson, D. D.

CHAPTER X.

COMPARATIVE READINGS.

THE production of any given author is subjected to a severe test by careful reading aloud. Dr. Francis Lieber once said in reference to the speeches of Daniel Webster: "To test Webster's oratory, which has ever been very attractive to me, I read a portion of my favorite speeches of Demosthenes, and then read, always aloud, parts of Webster; then returned to the Athenian; and Webster stood the test. I have done it several times."

The remarkable claim of the writers of the Bible, that the thoughts they record are "God-breathed," can be in some measure brought to trial, by reading selections from this Divine book, and following them by selections from the best uninspired thought on the same general themes. It is premised, of course, that the respective portions read, should be studied with equal care, to interpret fairly the thoughts to be thus put in contrast. A neglected line of evidence as to the majestic supremacy of the Word of God, over the best productions of the human mind, would not fail to be disclosed by this competitive trial of them. Isaiah might thus be compared with Homer, Job with

Æschuylus, and St. John with Plato. These have been designated, because the problems upon which they treat are in some instances similar, and because admirable translations of all are within easy reach.

The writer has presented to public audiences, the closing passages of Plato's description of the death of Socrates in the "Phaedo," and then read, for the effect of contrast, the nineteenth chapter of the gospel of St. John. The translation of the Phaedo used for this exercise, was the one included in the selections from Plato, entitled "Socrates," and published by Charles Scribner's Sons. The selection covers passages from page 132 to the end. Under skillful use of tone, emphasis and inflection, in reading these selections, a new import is imparted to the celebrated comment of Rosseau: "Socrates died like a Philosopher; Jesus Christ died like a God." The vividness and masterful force of this contrast is heightened by putting the productions mentioned, in this close juxtaposition. Read in immediate succession, one cannot fail to recognize the moral attitude of the Son of God on the cross, as set over against the martyr of the hemlock cup. And this will be only the more impressive, when we recognize the latter as occupying the summit of heathen morality. Its "bright consummate flower," is thus put side by side with our Lord. It may become not an insignificant

means of reënforcing the confidence of a Christian congregation, to enable them, in the way suggested, to bear witness in themselves, to the ability of Christian revelation to abide a rational and practical test.

Socrates says,—"I cannot persuade Crito, my friends, that this Socrates who is now talking with you, and laying down each one of these propositions, is my very self; for his mind is full of the thought that I am he, whom he is to see in a little while as a corpse; and so he asks how he shall bury me. Thus, that long argument of mine, the object of which was to show that after I have drunk the poison, I shall be among you no longer, but shall go away to certain joys prepared for the blessed, seem to him but idle talk, uttered only to keep up your spirits as well as my own. Do you, therefore, be my surety with Crito, though in a very different way from that in which he was surety for me before the judges. For he then pledged himself that I should remain; but you must now pledge yourselves that I shall not remain here after my death, but depart straightway. Thus will Crito bear it more easily, and, when he sees my body burned or buried, will not grieve over me as if I had suffered some dreadful thing, nor say at the funeral, that it is Socrates who is laid out on the bier, or carried forth to the grave, or buried. For you must know, dearest Crito,

that this false way of speaking, not only is wrong in itself, but also does harm to the soul. Rather should you be of good courage, and say that it is my body you are burying; and this you may do as you please, and in the way which you think most conformable to custom here."

Thus saying, he got up, and went into another room to bathe, and Crito followed him, but us he requested to stay behind. We remained, therefore, talking over with one another, and inquiring into what had been said; ever and again coming back to the misfortune which had befallen us; for we looked upon ourselves as doomed to go through the rest of life like orphans, bereft of a father.

After he had bathed, his children were brought to him,—for he had three sons, two very young, and one was older,—and the women of his household also arrived. And having talked with them, in the presence of Crito, and given them all his directions, he bade them depart, and himself returned to us. It was now near sunset, for he had spent a long time in the inner room. He came then and sat down with us, but he did not speak much after this. And the servant of the Eleven came and standing by him said: "I shall not have to reproach you, O Socrates, as I have others, with being enraged and cursing me, when I announce to them by order of the

magistrates, that they must drink the poison; but during this time of your imprisonment, I have learned to know you as the noblest, and gentlest, and best man of all that have ever come here, and so I am sure now that you will not be angry with me; for you know the real authors of this, and will blame them alone. And now—for you know what it is I have to announce—farewell, and try to bear as best you may, the inevitable." And upon this, bursting into tears, he turned and went away; and Socrates, looking after him, said:—

"May it fare well with you also! We will do what you have bidden." And to us he added, "How courteous the man is! The whole time I have been here, he has been constantly coming to see me, and has frequently talked to me, and shown himself to be the kindest of men; and see how feelingly he weeps for me now! But come, Crito, we must obey him. So let the poison be brought, if it is already mixed; if not, let the men mix it."

And Crito said: "But, Socrates, the sun, I think, is still upon the mountains, and has not yet gone down. Others, I know, have not taken the poison till very late, and have feasted and drunk right heartily, some even enjoying the company of their intimates, long after receiving the order. So do not hasten, for there is yet time."

But Socrates said: "It is very natural,

Crito, that those of whom you speak should do this, for they think to gain thereby; but it is just as natural that I should not do so, for I do not think that by drinking the poison a little later, I should gain anything more than a laugh at my own expense, for being greedy of life, and 'stingy when nothing is left.' So go and do as I desire."

At these words, Crito motioned to the servant standing by, who then went out, and, after some time, came back with the man who was to give the poison, which he brought mixed in a cup. And Socrates seeing the man said:—

"Well, my friend, I must ask you, since you have had experience in these matters, what I ought to do."

"Nothing," said he, "but walk about after drinking, until you feel a heaviness in your legs, and then, if you lie down, the poison will take effect of itself."

With this, he handed the cup to Socrates, who took it right cheerfully, O Echecrates, without tremor, or change of color or countenance, and, looking at the man from under his brows with that intense gaze peculiar to himself, said, "What say you to pouring a libation from this cup to one of the gods? Is it allowed or not?"

"We prepare, Socrates," answered he, "only just so much as we think is the right quantity to drink."

"I understand," said he; "but prayer to the gods is surely allowed, and must be made, that it may fare well with me on my journey yonder. For this then I pray, and so be it!"

Thus speaking, he put the cup to his lips, and right easily and blithely drank it off. Now most of us had, until then, been able to keep back our tears; but when we saw him drinking, and then that he had finished the draught, we could do so no longer. In spite of myself, my tears burst forth in floods, so that I covered my face and wept aloud, not for him assuredly, but for my own fate in being deprived of such a friend. Now Crito, even before I gave way, had not been able to restrain his tears, and so had passed away. But Apollodorus all along had not ceased to weep; and now, when he burst into loud sobs, there was not one of those present, who was not overcome by his tears and distress, except Socrates himself. But he asked, "What are you doing, you strange people? My chief reason for sending away the women, was that we might be spared such discordance as this; for I have heard that a man ought to die in solemn stillness. So pray be composed, and restrain yourselves."

On hearing this, we were ashamed, and forced back our tears. And he walked about until he said he began to feel a heaviness in his legs, and then he lay down on his back, as

he had been told to do. Thereupon, the man who had given the poison, taking hold of him, examined from time to time his feet and legs, and then, pressing one foot hard, asked if he felt it, to which he answered, "No;" and after that again his legs, and then still higher, showing us the while that he was getting cold and stiff. Then Socrates himself did the same, and said that by the time the poison had reached his heart, he should be gone. And now he was cold nearly up to his middle, when, uncovering his face, for he had covered it up, he said, and these were his last words, "Crito, we owe a cock to Æsculapius. Pay the debt, and do not neglect it."

"It shall be done, Socrates," said he. "But think if you have nothing else to say."

There was no answer to this question; but after a moment Socrates stirred, and when the man uncovered him, we saw that his face was set. Crito, on seeing this, closed his mouth and eyes. Such was the end, O Echecrates, of our friend, a man whom we may well call, of all men known to us of our day, the best, and, besides, the wisest and most just.

CHAPTER XIX. OF THE GOSPEL BY ST. JOHN.

"Then Pilate therefore took Jesus, and scourged him. And the soldiers plaited a crown of thorns, and put it on his head, and

arrayed him in a purple garment; and they came unto him and said, Hail, King of the Jews! And they struck him with their hands. And Pilate went out again, and saith unto them, Behold, I bring him out to you, that ye may know that I find no crime in him. Jesus therefore came out, wearing the crown of thorns, and the purple garment. And Pilate saith unto them, Behold, the man! When therefore the chief priests and the officers saw him, they cried out, saying, Crucify him, crucify him. Pilate saith unto them, Take him yourselves, and crucify him: for I find no crime in him. The Jews answered him, We have a law, and by that law he ought to die, because he made himself the Son of God.

"When Pilate therefore heard this saying, he was the more afraid; and he entered into the palace again, and saith unto Jesus, Whence art thou? But Jesus gave him no answer. Pilate therefore saith unto him, Speakest thou not unto me? knowest thou not that I have power to release thee, and have power to crucify thee? Jesus answered him, Thou wouldst have no power against me, except it were given thee from above: therefore he that delivered me unto thee hath greater sin. Upon this Pilate sought to release him: but the Jews cried out, saying, If thou release this man, thou art not Cæsar's friend; every one that maketh himself a king speaketh

against Cæsar. When Pilate therefore heard these words, he brought Jesus out, and sat down on the judgment-seat at a place called The Pavement, but in Hebrew, Gabbatha. Now it was the Preparation of the passover; it was about the sixth hour. And he saith unto the Jews, Behold, your King! They therefore cried out, Away with him, away with him, crucify him. Pilate saith unto them, Shall I crucify your King? The chief priests answered, We have no king but Cæsar. Then therefore he delivered him unto them to be crucified.

"They took Jesus therefore: and he went out, bearing the cross for himself, unto the place called The place of a skull, which is called in Hebrew Golgotha: where they crucified him, and with him two others, on either side one, and Jesus in the midst. And Pilate wrote a title also, and put it on the cross. And there was written, JESUS OF NAZARETH, THE KING OF THE JEWS. This title therefore read many of the Jews: for the place where Jesus was crucified was nigh to the city; and it was written in Hebrew, and in Latin, and in Greek. The chief priests of the Jews therefore said to Pilate, Write not, The King of the Jews; but, that he said, I am King of the Jews. Pilate answered, What I have written I have written.

"The soldiers therefore, when they had crucified Jesus, took his garments and made

four parts, to every soldier a part; and also the coat; now the coat was without seam, woven from the top throughout. They said therefore one to another, Let us not rend it, but cast lots for it, whose it shall be; that the scripture might be fulfilled, which saith,

> They parted my garments among them,
> And upon my vesture did they cast lots.

These things therefore the soldiers did. But there was standing by the cross of Jesus his mother and his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene. When Jesus therefore saw his mother, and the disciple standing by, whom he loved, he saith unto his mother, Woman, behold thy son! Then saith he to the disciple, Behold, thy mother! And from that hour the disciple took her unto his own home.

"After this, Jesus, knowing that all things are now finished, that the scripture might be accomplished, saith, I thirst. There was set there a vessel full of vinegar: so they put a sponge full of the vinegar upon hyssop, and brought it to his mouth. When Jesus therefore had received the vinegar, he said, It is finished: and he bowed his head, and gave up his spirit.

"The Jews therefore, because it was the Preparation, that the bodies should not remain on the cross upon the sabbath (for the day of that sabbath was a high day), asked of Pilate

that their legs might be broken, and that they might be taken away. The soldiers therefore came, and brake the legs of the first, and of the other which was crucified with him: but when they came to Jesus, and saw that he was dead already, they brake not his legs: howbeit one of the soldiers with a spear pierced his side, and straightway there came out blood and water. And he that hath seen hath borne witness, and his witness is true: and he knoweth that he saith true, that ye also may believe. For these things came to pass, that the scripture might be fulfilled, A bone of him shall not be broken. And again another scripture saith, They shall look on him whom they pierced.

"And after these things Joseph of Arimathæa, being a disciple of Jesus, but secretly for fear of the Jews, asked of Pilate that he might take away the body of Jesus: and Pilate gave him leave. He came therefore, and took away his body. And there came also Nicodemus, he who at the first came to him by night, bringing a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about a hundred pound weight. So they took the body of Jesus, and bound it in linen cloths with the spices, as the custom of the Jews is to bury. Now in the place where he was crucified there was a garden: and in the garden a new tomb wherein was never man yet laid. There then because of the Jews' Pre-

paration (for the tomb was nigh at hand) they laid Jesus."

In the Iliad the destines of the contending armies, hemmed in between the Scean gates and the "high-beaked ships" of the Greeks, turn in every instance upon the favor or disfavor of the gods. They put courage into the weakening will, and nerve the relaxing arm. There is no wisdom or device which thwarts the purpose of All-ruling Jove. But Jove and the Synod of Olympian deities were cruel and capricious, and not unfrequently the subject of unseemly jealousies and rivalries among themselves. The worship paid to them, could not raise those who offered it to a higher moral plane than the character which they conceived and imparted to them.

The fortieth chapter of Isaiah may be used for the purpose of presenting the contrast of its ideas of God, with those in the record of the council of the gods described in the eighth book of the Iliad, from the first line to the ninety-second. The writer uses Bryant's translation, and the revised Old Testament. After the exordium of comfort in the fortieth chapter, Isaiah breaks out into a prophetic strain, which looks forward to the reconciliation of all the disharmonies of the world:—

"The voice of one that crieth, Prepare ye in the wilderness the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert a highway for our God.

Every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain and hill shall be made low: and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough places plain: and the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together: for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it."

Then follows a contrast between the dissolving scene of human life, and the stability of the spoken Word of God.

"The voice of one saying, Cry. And one said, What shall I cry? All flesh is grass, and all the goodliness thereof is as the flower of the field: the grass withereth, the flower fadeth; because the breath of the Lord bloweth upon it: surely the people is grass. The grass withereth, the flower fadeth: but the word of our God shall stand for ever."

The summons to the teller of good things, which comes next in order, includes a declaration of Divine tenderness, the effect of which is enhanced by its position between passages which are conspicuous for outlinings of the "Mighty One." In the twelfth verse, we pass into an analysis of the intellectual attributes of God, which are revealed in the accurate mathematical adjustments of His creation. He is a measuring Deity; counting and weighing with unfailing precision. "Who hath measured the waters in the hollow of his hand, and meted out heaven with the span, and comprehended the dust of the earth in a

measure, and weighed the mountains in scales, and the hills in a balance?"

Of course, such an One needs no counselor. He does not require an adviser. "Who hath directed the spirit of the Lord, or being his counsellor hath taught him? With whom took he counsel, and who instructed him, and taught him in the path of judgment, and taught him knowledge, and shewed to him the way of understanding? Behold, the nations are as a drop of a bucket, and are counted as the small dust of the balance: behold, he taketh up the isles as a very little thing."

From verse sixteenth to the twenty-seventh is a section of descriptive contrast between this God and the idols made by human hands, "less than nothing, and vanity," together with assertions of his majestic sway over nature and men, closing with an appeal to the starry vault as the witness of his wisdom and might. The verses remaining to the end of the chapter apply this entire series of truths, to the heavy-hearted people of God.

"Why sayest thou, O Jacob, and speakest, O Israel, My way is hid from the Lord, and my judgment is passed away from my God? Hast thou not known? hast thou not heard? the everlasting God, the Lord, the Creator of the ends of the earth, fainteth not, neither is weary; there is no searching of his understanding. He giveth power to the faint; and

to him that hath no might he increaseth strength. Even the youths shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fall; but they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; they shall walk and not faint."

Let the reading of the entire chapter be followed by that of a selection from the eighth book of the Iliad, in which we have the account of the assembling of the gods at the call of Jove, to receive his command against interference between the Greeks and Trojans. These taken together present, it is thought, as strong and graphic a description of the "Thunderer," and his Synod of deities, as are to be found in the Iliad.

"Now morn in saffron robes had shed her light
O'er all the earth, when Jove the Thunderer
Summoned the gods to council on the heights
Of many-peaked Olympus. He addressed
The assembly, and all listened as he spake:—
'Hear, all ye gods and all ye goddesses!
While I declare the thought within my breast.
Let none of either sex presume to break
The law I give, but cheerfully obey,
That my design may sooner be fulfilled.
Whoever, stealing from the rest, shall seek
To aid the Grecian cause, or that of Troy,
Back to Olympus, scourged and in disgrace,
Shall he be brought, or I will seize and hurl
The offender down to rayless Tartarus,
Deep, deep in the great gulf below the earth,
With iron gates and threshold forged of brass,
As far beneath the shades as earth from heaven.

Then shall he learn how greatly I surpass
All other gods in power. Try if ye will,
Ye gods, that all may know; suspend from heaven
A golden chain; let all the immortal host
Cling to it from below: ye could not draw,
Strive as ye might, the all-disposing Jove
From heaven to earth. And yet, if I should choose
To draw it upward to me, I should lift,
With it and you, the earth itself and sea
Together, and I then would bind the chain
Around the summit of the Olympian mount,
And they should hang aloft. So far my power
Surpasses all the power of gods and men.'

He spake; and all the great assembly, hushed
In silence, wondered at his threatening words,
Until at length the blue-eyed Pallas said:—

'Our Father, son of Saturn, mightiest
Among the potentates, we know thy power
Is not to be withstood, yet are we moved
With pity for the warlike Greeks, who bear
An evil fate and waste away in war.
If such be thy command, we shall refrain
From mingling in the combat, yet will aid
The Greeks with counsel which may be their guide,
Lest by thy wrath they perish utterly.'

The Cloud-compeller Jove replied, and smiled:—
'Tritonia, daughter dear, be comforted.
I spake not in the anger of my heart,
And I have nought but kind intents for thee.'

He spake, and to his chariot yoked the steeds,
Fleet, brazen-footed, and with flowing manes
Of gold, and put his golden armor on,
And took the golden scourge, divinely wrought,
And, mounting, touched the coursers with the lash
To urge them onward. Not unwillingly
Flew they between the earth and starry heaven,
Until he came to Ida, moist with springs
And nurse of savage beasts, and to the height
Of Gargarus, where lay his sacred field,
And where his fragrant altar fumed. He checked

Their course, and there the Father of the gods
And men released them from the yoke and caused
A cloud to gather round them. Then he sat,
Exulting in the fullness of his might,
Upon the summit, whence his eye beheld
The towers of Ilium and the ships of Greece.

Now in their tents the long-haired Greeks had shared
A hasty meal, and girded on their arms.
The Trojans, also, in their city armed
Themselves for war, as eager for the fight,
Though fewer; for a hard necessity
Forced them to combat for their little ones
And wives. They set the city-portals wide,
And forth the people issued, foot and horse
Together, and a mighty din arose.
And now, when host met host, their shields and spears
Were mingled in disorder; men of might
Encountered, cased in mail, and bucklers clashed
Their bosses; loud the clamor: cries of pain
And boastful shouts arose from those who fell
And those who slew, and earth was drenched with blood.

While yet 't was morning, and the holy light
Of day grew bright, the men of both the hosts
Were smitten and were slain; but when the sun
Stood high in middle heaven, the All-Father took
His golden scales, and in them laid the fates
Which bring the sleep of death,—the fate of those
Who tamed the Trojan steeds, and those who warred
For Greece in brazen armor. By the midst
He held the balance, and, behold, the fate
Of Greece in that day's fight sank down until
It touched the nourishing earth, while that of Troy
Rose and flew upward toward the spacious heaven."

Chapters from the great epic of human sorrow, the book of Job, may be read in connection with selections from the "Promethus Bound" of Æschylus, to make evident not alone points of similarity in the mental difficul-

ties encountered in each case, but also to show contrast in the clearness with which these difficulties were met and solved. The twenty-eighth chapter of Job, read in connection with the passage in "Promethus Bound," from the address of Promethus, beginning with line ten hundred and twenty-third to the end of the poem, furnishes a good example of the contrast just mentioned.

The translation of Æschylus by Dr. Plumptre has been used for this reading by the author.

The following estimate of Æschylus by Prof. W. S. Tyler designates some points of resemblance between the former and Job:—

"The great problems which lie at the foundation of religious faith and practice—the same problems which are discussed by Job and his three friends—are the main staple of nearly all his tragedies. With him, these were not idle speculations. They were practical questions, with which his own mind had manifestly struggled, on which his own destiny was suspended, and into this solution of which he enters with not a little of the earnestness of a personal religious experience. The earlier poets—Homer, Hesiod, the sacred poets, and the authors of the so-called Homeric hymns—had looked at them in their more purely poetical aspects, and believed the myths, perhaps, with a more literal and implicit faith. The subsequent philosophers — Plato, Aristotle,

Plutarch—developed them more fully in a system of doctrines.

"Æschylus stands on the dividing line between them, no less poetical than the former, scarcely less philosophical than the latter, but more intensely practical, personal, and theological than either. The poet who most resembles him in modern times is the Puritan poet of Old England. A believer in metempsychosis might well maintain that the same soul dwelt in them both. To say nothing of the obvious resemblance between the Prometheus of the former and the Satan of the latter —which was in part, doubtless, the result of intentional imitation—and not to speak of a similar license in coining, or rather forging, ponderous poetical epithets, both were characterized by the same natural sublimity, both possessed by the same strong political and patriotic sympathies, and both fired with the same intense earnestness of religious feeling. Dante was another kindred spirit. The Inferno, the Paradise Lost, and the Promethus Bound, should be read and studied together. The Agamemnon is often and justly compared with Macbeth.

"But the English tragedy illustrates more the workings of the human soul, while the Greek leads us to think almost entirely of the providence of God. In this respect, perhaps, the tragedies of Æschylus find their nearest coun-

terpart in the book of Job. On the whole, there is no other book of which the reader of Æschylus will be more frequently reminded: the form of both is dramatic; the scene in both is primitive; the characters are the patriarchs and princes of an early age; the interlocutors discuss the same subjects; the same sublime and awful mystery casts its dark shadow over them; they grapple with themes too vast for their comprehension; they wrestle with beings too mighty to be resisted; they are overwhelmed with the contrast between the littleness and vileness of man, and the majesty and glory of God; and they cry out: 'What is man, that he should be pure? How shall man be just with his Maker? Who, by searching, can find out God? Lo, these are parts of his ways; but the thunder of his power who can understand?' It is not, then, a misnomer, to speak of the theology of Æschylus; nor can it fail to be a question of deep interest; What were the theological opinions of such a mind, so far removed from the light of revelation?"

"Each mind has its own method." *Emerson.*

"On his death-bed John Knox asked his wife to read the fifteenth chapter of 1 Corinthians, the magnificent description of the resurrection, and blessed God for the consolation which that chapter had given him. He afterward asked his wife to read, as he phrased it, the part of Scripture 'where he first cast anchor,' or began to cherish strong hope of personal salvation. It was the seventeenth chapter of John's Gospel. Telling his three fingers, he said, Now I commend my soul, spirit and body into thy hands, O Lord."

Wm. R. Williams, D. D.

"If a man looks to the law to make him holy, the highest result will be a cry of anguish, 'Wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me?' But, turning to the gospel, he sees hope of being delivered, and becoming holy, and may say, 'I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord.'"

John A. Broadus, D. D.

"What is truth? said jesting Pilate, and would not stay for an answer." *Lord Bacon.*

CHAPTER XI.

METHODS OF BIBLE STUDY.

BEFORE one fixes upon any method of biblical investigation, he must needs have made a spiritual discovery of the Book itself. Only thus can he assign to it its proper rank among books. Prof. Tischendorf has described his joy over the discovery of the Sinaitic MSS. of the complete New Testament in the convent of St. Catherine, at the foot of the Mount of the Law, in these terms: "Not till I reached my chamber, did I give myself up to the overpowering impression of the reality. My wildest hopes and dreams were more than accomplished. . . . In the presence of the newfound treasure, it was not possible for me to sleep."

An unknown writer, whose noble acrostic forms the one hundred and nineteenth psalm, itself a hymn of praise for those "statutes" which had become his "songs," says: "I rejoice in thy word as one that findeth great spoil." The original finding of the Bible as God's Word is followed by innumerable subordinate discoveries, which in turn stimulate the zest of search, and thus keep the soul eager and alert in its life-study of the sacred

volume. Many of the themes of the Book outreach human comprehension. But its subject-matter may be classified, and by industrious application apprehended, as statements, and the connection between the statements recognized. Desultory study should be supplanted by study according to a plan. It is the declaration of one of our noblest theologians, "that the power of method is closely allied to the power of genius." Says Dr. Shedd, in a paragraph preceding the sentence quoted above, "As in anatomy, the dissection follows the veins, or muscles, or nerves, or limbs in their branchings off, so the natural method, everywhere, never cuts across, but along the inward structure, following it out into its organic divisions. The science of method aids in discovering such a mode of investigation, and tends to produce in the investigator that fine, mental tact, by which he instinctively approaches a subject from the right point, and, like the slate quarryman, lays it open, along the line of its structure, and its fracture."

In another place, he adds these suggestive words: "What an interest would be thrown around the clerical life of one, who, in the providence of God, is separated from educated men and large libraries, by collecting about him the principal works upon the doctrine of the atonement, e. g., from the patristic, scho-

lastic, reformed, and present methods, and making them his study for a few hours every week. What a varied, yet substantially identical soteriology would pass slowly, but impressively, before his continually-expanding and strengthening mind! Carrying him back continually, as such investigation naturally and spontaneously would, to an examination of the scripture matter out of which this body of dogmatic literature has been expanded, what a determined strength and broad comprehensiveness of theological character would be gradually and solidly built up, like a coral isle, in that man's mind."

There is an obvious connection between methods of private study of the Scriptures, and successful uses of them in public. Different students of the Word have expressed preference for different plans of searching for its treasure. Not every miner works in precisely the same way.

I. Study of themes and words has been remunerative, in a high degree, to students, ancient and modern. Dr. James H. Brookes bears emphatic testimony, as follows, to this method: "The whole Bible should be read in regular order from the beginning to the end, and it should be *studied* by subjects or words. Take any doctrine, any topic, any word, any name, and follow it through the various books from Genesis to Revelation, and glad sur-

prises will attend every step of the investigation. There is not a chapter in the Old Testament that will not become luminous by this method of searching, and there is not a chapter that will fail to open up a rich and interesting field, over which the delighted mind can roam for hours, discovering new beauties at every step, and new and deeper meaning at every successive examination. This assertion may seem extravagant to those who have never tried the plan here suggested, but there are many, thank God, who know the joy of such study. They will declare, with one voice, that the Bible has become a new book to them, that all other books in comparison are tame and insipid, and that ten thousand proofs of its Divine origin, which they find it impossible to put into words, are continually bursting into their view. If asked why they believe God made the Bible, they would be disposed to reply, 'For the same reason that we believe He made the world; He who made the one made the other.'"

In an address, delivered at the recent Bible-Inspiration Conference by Dr. Geo. S. Bishop, he argues for the supreme authority of Scripture, because of the character of the investigation challenged for the Word of God. "The Bible courts the closest scrutiny. Its open pages blaze the legend: 'Search the Scriptures!' *Ereunao*—'Search.' It is a sports-

man's term, and borrowed from the chase. 'Trace out'—'track out'—follow the word in all its usages and windings. Scent it out to its remotest meanings, as a dog the hare. 'They searched,' again says St. Luke, in the Acts, of the Bereans. There is another word, *anakrino*, 'they divided up,' analyzed, sifted, pulverized, as in a mortar, to the last thought. Apply your microscopes, apply your telescopes, to the material of Scripture. They separate, but do not fray, its threads. They broaden out its nebulæ, but find them clustered stars. They do not reach the hint of poverty in Scripture. They nowhere touch on coarseness in the fabric, nor on limitations in horizon, as always is the case when tests of such a character are brought to bear on any work of man's. You put a drop of water, or a fly's wing, under a microscope. The stronger the lens, the more that drop of water will expand, till it becomes an ocean filled with sporting animalcules. The higher the power, the more exquisite, the more silken, become the tissues of the fly's wing, until it attenuates almost to the golden and gossamer threads of a seraph's. So is it with the Word of God. The more scrutiny, the more divinity; the more dissection, the more perfection. We cannot bring to it a test too penetrating, nor a light too lancinating, nor a touchstone too exacting."

We cannot afford, in this specific method of study, to neglect the illustrations and symbols of the Scripture. The Bible seems to have been largely written out of doors. Doubtless it was part of the Divine plan to make the forms of external nature the proper vesture of Divine truth. The men of the Bible fitted the truth to its proper symbol. They saw double, in that they saw the body of truth, when they saw its spirit.

> "The swan on still Saint Mary's lake
> Float double, swan and shadow."

When Jacob reads out, in prophetic vision, the future of his sons, he finds the history of Judah in the lion; of Benjamin in the wolf; and of Joseph in the fruitful bough whose branches run over the wall. In the discourses of our Lord, both parable and figure were drawn from familiar sources. Did not His own trade furnish Him, by natural and easy transitions, with suggestive illustrations? The planning and building of the house, the safe and the insecure foundation, and finally the making ready of mansions in the Father's house, is there not in all these a reminiscence of the carpenter life at Nazareth?

II. The Bible may be divided according to authorship, and each writer's production read by itself. In a sermon, entitled "The Wonderful Book," Dr. James E. Gilbert says of

the Bible writers: "About thirty different men, residing in Egypt, Arabia, Palestine, and Babylon, were employed on the Old Testament, and they were distributed over eleven centuries, beginning with 1500 B. C., very few of them being contemporary. The New Testament was written by eight men, scattered about the Roman empire, having but little association together; and they were occupied, from first to last, about sixty years. What might be expected, under such circumstances? Just what always occurs in every department of purely human endeavor, provided these men wrote self-moved. Whatever man does is imperfect. They who come after discover and correct the mistakes of those who went before. Each Testament, therefore, if it was the work of men, ought to present a series of advances from error to truth, from lesser to fuller knowledge.

"What did occur? Samuel did not correct Moses: Malachi did not dispute Samuel. The thirty writers of the Old Testament are in full accord throughout. The work of each, perfect in itself, needed no revision. No one assumed superiority over another. Each accepted at its full original value what his predecessors wrote. Each had one and the same great theme, religion—the same religion, always the same religion. No one, however religion fared among the people, whether it was received or

rejected, appeared to know any defect in religion, or dream of any change in it. Each taught with boldness the same great fundamental and saving truths, whether men would hear or forbear. Each had one end in view, to testify of the promised Saviour, who was coming through the seed of Abraham, and to prepare for His advent.

"And, when the last sentence was written, that purpose was as successfully accomplished as if, living in the same city at the same time, they had been permitted to hold frequent conference for the joint performance of such a task under specific directions, with the materials carefully collected and placed in their hands. Working apart, they worked together. They were never diverted from their one theme, religion—the same religion taught in the Old Testament, but that religion now a gospel, the promised Saviour having become historic. They never criticise or oppose each other. Each appears to have a definite part. Their completed writings show, in an orderly and beautiful manner, how the Christ came, how He established His kingdom, how He invited all men into it, how He treats those who enter, how finally that kingdom shall become universal."

III. The Bible may be read by its great dispensational divisions. There are sharply-defined historical periods, which may be

studied by themselves. These great periods may be stated thus:—

(1) From the creation to the fall.
(2) From the fall to the flood.
(3) From the flood to the calling of Abraham.
(4) From the calling of Abraham to Moses.
(5) From Moses to David.
(6) From David to the Babylonian captivity.
(7) From the Babylonian captivity to the advent of Christ.
(8) From the advent of Christ to His resurrection.
(9) From Christ's resurrection to the close of the New Testament canon.

IV. The study of the Bible by the separate books which constitute it, has some advantages over any of the preceding methods. While each book is an individual production, each is specially connected with what follows. Indeed one book creates the necessity for another. The family of Abraham, as we find them in Genesis, become a nation, and Exodus follows them into their wider theatre of history. If there had been no advent of the Holy Spirit, the New Testament would have closed with the gospels. It is not difficult to carry on a general line of reading in connection with the study of a particular book. Take, for instance, the gospel of Matthew, and concentrate attention upon it for six months. Settle these questions: How does this gospel differ from the remaining three? What terms are found in it never found in the others? What is its ground-thought and dominant purpose? In

time this gospel will leave in the mind its mark of identity, and, as the study is extended to other books, they will every one be found to exhibit peculiar features, like the planets of the solar system, under a powerful telescope. These books have each their well-defined purpose. And each supplements the others. The Bible is a mosaic of many-colored stones, each one of which has its own original lustre. Like the jewels on the breastplate of the High Priest, each shines with a glow peculiar to itself.

The words of Dr. J. A. Broadus are in point here: "You cannot understand any book if you read it only by fragments, I mean the first time you read it. A cultivated gentleman remarked at dinner to-day that he was reading, for the third time, that beautiful book of piety, 'The Memorials of a Quiet Life,'—reading it for the third time, fifteen minutes of every day he said. That is very well when he is reading it for the third time; but if he had read it fifteen minutes of every day the first time, he could not have entered so fully into the meaning of the book. The celebrated John Locke says, in the preface to his commentary on the Epistles to Paul, that he had found by experience that in order to understand one of those Epistles, it will not do to take it in fragments. Why, suppose (the philosopher goes on) that a man has received a letter

from an absent friend, whom he loves very much—a letter full of valuable instruction to him—and that he reads a page to-day, and then lays it down; the next day he begins at the beginning of the second page, and does not notice much what was at the end of the first, and reads the second page; the third day he begins at the top of the third page, and reads that. How much will he know about the letter when he is done? He tells you, perhaps, I have been reading a letter from so and so, a letter full of valuable instruction, and you ask him what it is about; he does not quite know what it is about, and no wonder, with such a process of reading."

"As the barley-winnower, holding with pain
Aloft in waiting his chaff and grain,
Joyfully welcomes the far-off breeze
Sounding the pine-tree's slender keys,
So he who had waited long to hear
The sound of the Spirit drawing near,
Like that which the son of Iddo heard
When the feet of angels the myrtles stirred,
Felt the answer of prayer, at last,
As over his church the afflatus passed,
Breaking its sleep as breezes break
To sun-bright ripples a stagnant lake."

John G. Whittier.

"No powerful array of logic is recommended for convincing an unbelieving world of the Deity of Christ. On the contrary we are admonished that 'no man can say that Jesus is Lord but by the Holy Spirit.'"

Rev. A. J. Gordon, D. D.

"The work of the Holy Spirit is to testify of Christ; He comes for that purpose. I believe the world would have forgotten Christ's death as soon as they forgot His birth, if it had not been for the Holy Spirit."

D. L. Moody.

CHAPTER XII.

THE BIBLE IN THE PRAYER MEETING.

THE venerated form of a Scotch deacon, who was "mighty in the Scriptures," is always associated in the mind of the writer, with thoughts of the uses of the Bible in the prayer meeting. Deacon S—— was a gardener in a western city, who loved his flowers and his Bible, and who when he came to the meeting would sometimes say, "I have no word of my own to-night, and so I'll repeat a psalm." With his Scotch accent, and deep looking insight into its meanings, what a contribution of light and power the recitation of the psalm was to his fellow-worshipers! The Word has a new interest to us after it has passed through human lips. Carried at the bedside of the dying in the tones of a familiar voice to the ear, it succors the fainting spirit, even as Bunyan quaintly says of the waters of the river of death, "they were deeper or shallower as one believed in the King of the place." Twice the apostle Paul, and once the apostle James exhorts to the use of psalms in the ministry of Christians one to another.

The memorizing of different portions of

the Bible with special reference to such uses would greatly augment the interest of the prayer meeting services. The best memorizing is that which comes from loving interest in the promises of the sacred volume. We learn them by heart, as we are accustomed to say, when they take hold of our affections, as the most cherished words of friends have done. Who could forget his mother's farewell injunction? Who would forget the provisions of a will, which had made him the inheritor of a vast estate, which will was written in thoughtful love for the future of the one named? Love is the best prompter of the memory, and in the assemblies of Christians the repetition of a promise which has helped the one who repeats it, is frequently more grateful to those present than any other portion of the service. The results justify a most deliberate preparation for the prayer meeting service.

The Holy Spirit does not suggest any passage of Scripture which has not been previously lodged in the memory. If the topic for the evening is announced on Sunday for the mid-week prayer meeting, a little time given to it by each member will enable him to select and study some one or more passages appropriate to it. Women and children may come up with their offering of truth, the fruit of their lips. What variety would such general

participation in the service give! Indeed such variety and interest the writer and many others have witnessed in gatherings for prayer and praise. The preparation suggested would store the memory in time with the riches of Divine truth.

Mr. Ruskin's testimony to the value of Scripture memorized should not be forgotten. Writing of his oldest Bible, he says: "My mother's list of the chapters with which, having learned every syllable accurately, she established my soul in life, has just fallen out of it. Exodus, chapters 15th and 20th. 2 Samuel, chapter 1st, from 17th verse to the end. 1 Kings, chapter 8th, Psalms 23rd, 32nd, 90th, 91st, 103rd, 112th, 119th, 139th. Proverbs, chapters 2nd, 3rd, 8th, 12th. Isaiah, chapter 58th. Matthew, chapters 5th, 6th, 7th. Acts, chapter 26th. 1 Corinthians, chapters 13th, 15th. James, chapter 4th. Revelation, chapters 5th, 6th. And truly, though I have picked up the elements of a little further knowledge,—in mathematics, meteorology, and the like, in after life—and owe not a little to the teaching of many people, this maternal installation of my mind in that property of chapters, I count very confidently the most precious, and, on the whole, the one essential part of all my education." The repetition of Bible promises stimulates prayer and gives it intelligent direction.

All legitimate sources should be drawn from, to make the prayer meeting attractive and popular. The conditions of attractiveness are the same as those of power and effectiveness. The Spirit of God working in human hearts, invests them with a marvelous, though unconscious ability to draw others. When the Pentecost effusion took place, it was noised abroad, and the multitude came together. Good men have sometimes a morbid aversion to popularity. In its best sense, it is something to be sought for the prayer meeting. Our early memories of social meetings which were unsocial, and of prayer meetings in which there was no real prayer, are vivid and conclusive, as to the effect of an unpopular meeting. Says Dr. Cuyler, in a recent tract, entitled "The Model Prayer Meeting:" "What is more pitiful than to see a poor embarrassed elder or deacon sit before a petrified company, and after a long, awful pause, in which you can count the clock-ticks, beseechingly implore 'some brother present to improve the time?' As if the dreary dribble of dullness that was forced out by such a process was not a downright misimprovement and murder of the sweet sacred hour of devotion. It is no wonder that so many of us grew up with a loathing for the very name, and next to a taste of the birch that grew behind the school house, we dreaded a sentence to 'go

to prayer meeting.' Our only solace was a sound nap, until some one shook our eyes open, and with an admonitory thump informed us that 'meetin's out; it is time to go home.'"

What a libel is a meeting thus characterized, upon that Christianity which kindled holy fervors of apostles and martyrs, and which now sustains and satisfies millions of souls amid conflicts and tribulation! We should bring a sense of Divine things with us to the social meeting, instead of going there to obtain it. The "open reward," which is conferred upon secret prayer, should be waited for here. As in the building of the old temple, the stones were squared and hewn outside, and rose noiselessly to their places, so the work preparatory to success in supplication, should be done elsewhere. The soul should come like a cloud full of rain. The ends thus indicated can be secured only as we recognize the permanency of the dispensation of the Spirit. The Spirit has already come. The prophecy of Joel is fulfilled. As the atmosphere about us presses so many pounds upon the square inch, so does this Spirit press upon our hearts to be received. We are directed to cease our resistance to Him. We are exhorted not to grieve or quench Him. Oh! for eyes to behold His present and perpetual ministration! The Word is always nigh us, and when used by us with brevity and appropriateness, we furnish the first essen-

tial conditions of success in the social meeting. An article appeared not long since in a religious journal entitled "Prayer Meeting Killers." There is the brother whose exercises are nearly always too lengthy. How the pastor writhes inwardly when he rises! We had a member in the old church in New England who, by the clock, prayed one-half hour, and spoke the same length of time in one meeting. For years the exercises of this same brother constituted the heaviest affliction through which the church were called to pass. The person who habitually prays and speaks briefly and to the point, is always welcome when he participates in the meeting. On the other hand, no graces of Christian character make amends for prolixity and tediousness. Few persons who take part in our meetings are aware how much time they occupy. No rule can be given to cover all cases. There is a great diversity in the numbers and gifts of those who compose the social meetings in our churches. But we venture the opinion that a change for better edification would be inaugurated in most of them, if those who are active in them were more brief in their exercises. We live in an age of rapid movement. In every department there is concentration, quickness. Besides, the examples of prayer in Scripture are all brief. The longest prayer reported in the Bible was that offered at the time of the dedi-

cation of Solomon's temple, an occasion of national and extraordinary interest. It can be read through leisurely in seven minutes. The Lords's prayer may be read in the same deliberate manner, in one minute. Those of the apostles are concise and comprehensive, never long.

Careful study of the prayers of the Bible cannot fail to equip us for efficiency in the prayer meeting service. Prayer is both a gift and an acquisition. The original aptitude for voicing our own desires and those of others, can be cultivated and directed. Cultivation comes from devout exercise of the gift at suitable times; and direction, from a study of the great lines of Scripture petitions. As the wool takes its tinge from the dye, so our prayers should bear the predominant colors of biblical thought, and only by habitual familiarity with that thought as experienced by psalmists and prophets, by apostles and by our Lord Himself, who taught His disciples how to pray, can we come into possession of it. "The prayers of David the Son of Jesse," furnish us with moulds of expression for how many and varied spiritual conditions. With him we say, "thy servant hath found in his heart to pray this prayer unto thee." The purposes of God become the prayers of His people before they are accomplished in the earth. He who is instructed unto the kingdom knows what

keys to touch, and all who are instructed in like manner respond to His supplication, so that in the assembly for special prayer, the voice of one becomes the mouth-piece of many.

Especially does it contribute to true edification, if our prayers are in the currents of New Testament revelation. The prayers of the Epistles strike some notes not struck even in the Psalms. In his letter to the Ephesians, the apostle reports a petition of his own, whose breadth and compass make it a model worthy of much explorative study. This petition, embracing verses from the fifteenth of the first chapter to its end, records a succession of desires expressed to God in behalf of those to whom he wrote, which rise in an ascending series, like the terraces of a lofty mountain. Each one of these desires hinges upon the knowledge of certain facts concerning the person and work of Christ for us. The great apostle in his Roman prison, was in no region of misty speculation when he bowed there in prayer for distant brethren. The luminous facts of Christ's redemptive service shone out one by one before his clarified vision, and one by one he names them in this wonderful pleading. What enlargement and solid footing would be imparted to our prayers if we could, even in a faint degree, imbibe the spirit of this single supplication! This apostle falls naturally in his Epistles, into the habit of

quoting his own prayers. In every Epistle written by him, the windows of his room or cell, as the case might be, opened toward the Heavenly Jerusalem, so that there were intervals between the counsels given, in which his heart went out in prayer. Indeed prayer arose spontaneously out of the recognition of certain fundamental facts, so that he says: "For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father." Did he not drop his pen as these high vistas opened to him, that he might bow his knees in adoration and prayer! A similar natural stimulus to prayer comes to every believer from patient looking into the Word; and prayer gets its powerful leverage out of Divine facts. Thus private study and prayer have their "open reward" in the prayer meeting, even as the same teacher and apostle has said in his first Epistle to the Corinthians:—"How is it then, brethren? when ye come together, every one of you hath a psalm, hath a doctrine, hath a tongue, hath a revelation, hath an interpretation. Let all things be done unto edifying."

It is quite true that the prayer meeting held strictly to the New Testament model, is subject to variations of mood, and different degrees and kinds of spiritual interest. In the nature of the case it brings the people, without the intervention of any form, directly before God. Its special character at any given time,

will of course reflect the characteristic spiritual state of those who gather to it. A period of sorrow will naturally voice itself in petitions for comfort; one of joy will find its outlet in psalms which have been made to voice the emotions appropriate to this condition. And the word of truth, if used with reference to these changing states of the Christian life, will be found to contain resources ample enough and varied enough to meet every case.

"It standeth and will stand,
Without or change or age,
The word of majesty and light,
The Church's heritage."

"An English antiquarian, who had the curiosity to number the existing commentaries upon the Scriptures, or upon portions of them, found them to exceed sixty thousand."

"Bible study is not the weighing of text against text, but the estimating of great streams of tendency, the following of great lines of thought, the apprehension of the spirit of great spiritual thinkers, who had the mind of Christ. The single verse is no longer like a jewel set in a wall, which one can pluck out and carry as an independent thing. It is a window by which we may look through the wall, and see the richness it encloses." *Phillips Brooks.*

"And he said unto them, Therefore every scribe who hath been made a disciple of the kingdom of heaven, is like unto a man that is a householder, which bringeth forth out of his treasure things new and old." Matt. xiii. 52.

CHAPTER XIII.

ANALYSIS OF CHAPTERS. (OLD TESTAMENT.)

THE plan of the present work will not admit of much detail in analysis of words and verses. The aim has rather been to indicate some resources of the Bible largely unused in public worship and teaching, and to stimulate inquiry with reference to its ampler and more productive utility in these directions. It is hoped that the present chapter, with that which is to follow, by some general classification of themes to be read in connection, together with a brief analysis of the subject-matter of the passages selected, may furnish definite and practical examples of habitual work in Bible-reading. In making choice, first, of selections from the Old Testament for the practice indicated, one labors under what the French call "the embarrassment of riches." There are no waste places in Scripture like the "Great American Desert" put down upon our old maps. Even what were once thought dry tables of genealogy are found to contain hints and suggestions which shed light upon important historical, chronological, and philological questions. The story of Joseph, in which one almost sees, across the tracts of years, the coming and going of

Joseph's brethren between Canaan and Egypt; the history of Ruth, the gentle Moabitess; the book itself the Old Testament idyl of the fields, in the reading of which one almost hears the rustling of the wheat on the slopes of Bethlehem; the book of Esther, where we follow the fortunes of a Jewish maiden into the splendors of the Persian Court;—the time would fail us to unfold these. It is well that we individualize these treasure-houses, however, and that other memorable portions be marked by names, which enable us to classify and recall them easily. Others who have wrought in this mine for treasure, have already named some of them. A few of the natural designations of notable Old Testament Scriptures are given.

"The Birth Song of Sarah," Gen. xxi. 6, 7; "The Charge of Joshua," Josh. xxiii.; "The Oration of Moses on the Plains of Moab, with his song and blessing," Deut. xxix. and xxx. chapters; "Samuel's sentence upon Saul," 1 Sam. xv. chapter; "The Swan Song of David," 2 Sam. xxiii. chap., 1–7 verses; "The Challenge of Elijah," 1 Kings, xviii. chap., 21–40 verses.

What throng of battle-triumphs and trumpet-peals of prophets upon special occasions! What victorious psalms and proverbs, set before men as warning signals, might be added to these! They are but examples of

portions of the body of Old Testament revelation, which have been named in view of the conspicuous feature which they bear.

Under the title, *Sin in the Old Testament*, several selections have been made, which, together, constitute a historical perspective of the theme, and the whole of which can be made available for an evening reading.

I. *Sin in its Origin.* Third chapter of Genesis.

Professor Bush has said, "to resolve this chapter into an allegory, creates more difficulties than it removes." The severe simplicity of the record; the direct movement of the thought, toward the solution of the question of the origin of sin; the unstated, but obviously representative character of the transaction, are notes of inspiration, which are clearly disclosed in an impressive reading without comment. The chapter taken alone is a complete unity in its subject-matter, one of the "little Bibles" within the greater Book. The record of the temptation, and fall proper, begins with the first verse and closes with the seventh, a sad story soon told; but carrying the roots of a race-alienation from God. The serpent appears suddenly in paradise, then

> "Another heaven
> From heaven-gate not far, founded in view
> On the clear Hyaline, the glassy sea."

The brief colloquy with the woman issues in

the first sin. This very result brings Jehovah upon the scene, and most of the remaining verses of the chapter are devoted to questions and answers, as between Himself, Adam, and Eve, followed by the address to the serpent, and the first evangel, a clear sunbeam, shining through the gloom of the sorrow and labor of the primal curse. The last section is the deliberate and solemn closing up of the scene and period of the first probation.

"And the Lord God said, Behold, the man is become as one of us, to know good and evil; and now, lest he put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live forever; therefore the Lord God sent him forth from the garden of Eden, to till the ground from whence he was taken. So he drove out the man; and he placed at the east of the garden of Eden the Cherubim, and the flame of a sword which turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of life."

The reach and compass of the interrogations in this selection deserve special study. The first insinuation of the tempter was by a question, and the penetrating inquisition of Jehovah which follows the deed of transgression, suggests the magnitude of the issues involved, as no other form of the statement could do. The passage is to be studied as a whole, with a view to recognition of its different elements; and then read with special deliberation and

use of pause between the scenes described. This may be followed by a picture of

II. *Sin as rebellion.* 2 Samuel xviii. chapter.

The last scene of the life of David's ill-starred son, is given with unusual dramatic skill in this chapter, which may be divided as follows:—

First. David's charge to the commanders before the battle of the forest of Ephraim.

Second. Absalom's tragic end under the oak, at the hand of Joab.

Third. The departure and running of the Cushite and Ahimaaz, the son of Zadok, with the tidings of the day, to David at Mahanaim.

Fourth. David's passionate grief over the death of Absalom.

Few descriptions of the inspired Word equal this in pathos, life-like delineation, and suggestive interest. The partial fondness for his son which prompted David's earnest request, "Deal gently for my sake with the young man, even with Absalom," is an instance of that forgetfulness of the close connection between sin and penalty, which, alas! the broken-hearted father had so much occasion afterwards to remember. Judgment cannot deal gently. Joab's sharp arrows were the messengers it would properly use. War cannot be a gentle game:—

"Hoarse barks the wolf, the vulture screams from far,
The Angel, Pity, shuns the walks of war."

In the second part of the chapter Absalom's pride becomes his snare, and Joab, the Hotspur of the time, is only too eager to use his opportunity. The division following gives the choice and race of the messengers with the news of the issue of the battle. Joab's reluctance to allow Ahimaaz to go in this instance was justified by the fact that he had not the courage, after reaching the king's presence, to inform him of the death of his son. The closing scene has been admirably portrayed by Dr. Wm. M. Taylor in his "David, King of Israel."

"But how was the news to be broken to his father? Ahimaaz offered to be the bearer of the tidings. But Joab would not intrust him with the commission, and preferred to send one Cushi, most probably an Ethiopian servant, with the message. This, however, did not satisfy the high-priest's son; so, extorting a permission from the captain of the host, the fleet courier ran, and arrived first at the gate of Mahanaim, where a scene occurred which lets us far into the unfathomed depths of a true parent's heart. Fastened, and almost fascinated to the spot, the king is still in the same place in which he had parted from his troops in the early morning. All day long he has been waiting for intelligence; and as he has sat watching there, his throne, his crown, his kingdom, all have been forgotten in his

eager concern for Absalom. He is not now the king, so much is he the father. When the swift-footed Ahimaaz comes with tidings of the victory, they are all unheeded as the question rises, 'Is the young man Absalom safe?' And when Cushi makes his appearance, the inquiry still is, 'Is the young man Absalom safe?' Then, as the full truth comes out, everything else is swallowed up in that emotion which, sweeping gratitude, and submission, and even faith in God, before it for the time, bears him up to the chamber over the gate, where he cries, with a great and exceeding bitter cry, 'O my son Absalom! my son, my son Absalom! would God I had died for thee, O Absalom, my son, my son!' There are griefs, as well as joys, with which a stranger may not intermeddle; let us shut the chamber door and withdraw, leaving the royal mourner a while in the sanctity of his sore sorrow, while we seek to glean from the narrative the solemn lessons which it teaches."

III. *Sin as Personal Guilt and Defilement.* Fifty-first Psalm.

Robertson of Brighton says of this psalm, "It is not the trembling of a craven spirit in anticipation of torture, but the agonies of a nobler one, in the horror of *being* evil." The historical background of these confessions of a penitent soul, which have formed the liturgy

of the sin-burdened ever since, is, of course, the sin of David in the double crime which involved woman and man, and which was laid upon his conscience by the bold charge of the prophet Nathan. The translation by Dr. John De Witt, in the "Praise Songs of Israel," separates the different members of this psalm by simply spacing the page ; but this arrangement assists so much to an intelligible reading of it, that it is introduced here :—

Be gracious unto me, O God! according to Thy loving kindness ;
According to Thy great compassion, blot out my transgressions.
Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity ;
Yea, cleanse me from my sin.

For my transgressions I know,
And my sin is ever before me.
Against Thee, Thee only, have I sinned,
And have done this evil in Thy sight ;
That Thou mayest be just when Thou speakest,
And be clear when Thou judgest.
Lo, in iniquity was I born,
And in sin my mother conceived me.
Lo, truth Thou desirest in the inmost parts,
And deep within Thou instructest me in wisdom.

Purify me with hyssop, and I shall be clean ;
Wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.
Proclaim unto me joy and gladness,
That the bones Thou hast crushed may rejoice.
O hide Thou Thy face from my sins
And blot out all mine iniquities.

A pure heart create for me, O God!
A steadfast spirit renew within me.
Cast me not away from Thy presence,
And Thy Holy Spirit take not from me.
Restore unto me the joy of Thy salvation,
And with a willing spirit uphold me.

Then will I teach transgressors Thy way,
And sinners shall return unto Thee.
Deliver me from bloodguiltiness, O God,
Thou God of my salvation!
That my tongue may exult in Thy righteousness.
O Lord! open Thou my lips,
And my tongue shall declare Thy praise.
For Thou delightest not in sacrifice,
Else would I give it;
In offerings by fire Thou hast no pleasure.
The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit;
A heart broken and contrite, O God! Thou wilt not despise.

Do good in Thy pleasure unto Zion;
Build Thou the walls of Jerusalem.
Then wilt Thou delight in sacrifices of righteousness,
In burnt offering and whole burnt offering;
Then shall they offer bullocks upon Thine altar.

Mark how the cry for mercy alternates with the sobbed-forth confession of guilt, in the first and second divisions. The royal penitent rises, in the third and fourth, into inspired and eager longing for cleansing and purity; in the fifth he looks onward to that work for others which would be fitting a restored sinner. Finally he breaks out in prayer for Zion and Jerusalem, as if the awful eclipse were over, and light had dawned again.

IV. *Sin as Vanity and Disappointment.* Second chapter of Ecclesiastes.

This is the refrain of a human spirit, which had traversed the whole round of earthly honor and pleasure, only to find an "aching void" within. The expression, "under the sun," which is employed no less than twenty-eight times in the book of Ecclesiastes, is the key to its moral standpoint. The skepticism and fatalism, which certain passages seem to contain, are in keeping with the circumscribed position. The second chapter is the record of a series of experiments of the writer, to satisfy himself with whatever this present life, at its highest and best, could yield. The lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, each bestow all they have to give, and the writer leaves us his conclusion when the round has been fulfilled. Mirth and hilarity become his guests. All, or nearly all, of Milton's L'Allegro, is between verses first and twelfth. He woos "Jest and youthful jollity,"

. . . . . .

"Sport that wrinkled care derides,
And laughter holding both his sides."

The quest of earthly wisdom yields no better result. The level of the philosopher was indeed higher than that of the sensualist, but the heart was left without a spring of satisfaction.

This is the conclusion reached in the verses which follow to the end. The chapter, read according to its original design, which was to lead the heart to seek its center beyond the sun, will be found to possess unique adaptation to impress and convict sincere inquirers after light.

V. *Sin as Idolatry and Blasphemy.* Daniel, v. chapter.

This delineation, in the last scene in the history of the empire of Babylon, should be read in connection with its historical antecedents and surroundings. We have the authority of Herodotus for the statement that Babylon was taken "amid revelries." On this very night, whose banqueting and blasphemy Daniel has so vividly described, the enemy was before the city. The handwriting on the wall was the awful shadow of doom, and thus interpreted by the Hebrew Seer. The account of this startling apparition, breaking into the carnival of that last night, together with the failure of the wise men to read it, and the counsel of the queen to summon Daniel, occupies the first division of the chapter from verses first to thirteenth. The remaining portion to the end of the chapter records the interview between Daniel and Belshazzar, and the disclosure of the meaning of the mystic inscription. With what poised deliberation and solemn emphasis did this alien "of the children of the captivity

of Judah" tell out the destiny now at the very doors of this guilty city, held, from the palace to the lowest dwelling, in the deceitful spell of drunkenness and riot!

"And this is the writing that was inscribed, MENE, MENE, TEKEL, UPHARSIN. This is the interpretation of the thing: MENE; God hath numbered thy kingdom, and brought it to an end. TEKEL; thou art weighed in the balances, and art found wanting. PERES; thy kingdom is divided, and is given to the Medes and Persians. Then commanded Belshazzar, and they clothed Daniel with purple, and put a chain of gold about his neck, and made proclamation concerning him, that he should be the third ruler in the kingdom. In that night Belshazzar the Chaldean king was slain. And Darius the Mede received the kingdom, being about threescore and two years old."

Prof. Briggs' critical estimate of Hebrew poetry suggests its value for public reading:—

"We find the climax of Hebrew poetic art, where the dramatic and heroic elements combine to produce in a larger whole, ethical and religious results with wonderful power. While these do not present us epic, or dramatic, or pastoral poems in the classic sense, they yet use the epic, dramatic, and pastoral elements in perfect freedom, combining them in a simple and comprehensive manner for the

highest and grandest purposes of the prophet and sage inspired of God, giving us productions of poetic art that are unique in the world's literature. The dramatic, epic, and pastoral elements are *means* used freely and fully, but not *ends*. These forms of beauty and grace are simply forms which do not retard the imagination in admiration of themselves, but direct it to the grandest themes and images of piety and devotion. The wise men of Israel present us in the ideals of the Shulamite, Job, and Koheleth, types of noble character, moral heroism, and purity, that transcend the heroic types of the Iliad or Æneid, wrestling, as they do, with foes to their souls far more terrible than the spears, and javelins, and warring gods of Greek and Trojan, advancing, step by step, through scene after scene, and act after act, to holy victory in the fear of God; victories that will serve for the support and comfort of the human race in all time, which has ever to meet the same inconsistencies of evil, the same assaults on virtue, the same struggle with doubt and error, therein so vividly and faithfully portrayed to us. The prophets of Israel play upon the great heart of the Hebrew people as upon a thousand-stringed lyre, striking the tones with divinely-guided touch, so that from the dirge of rapidly succeeding disaster and ruin, they rise, through penitence

and petition, to faith, assurance, exultation, and hallelujah, laying hold of the deep thoughts and everlasting faithfulness of God, binding the past and present as by a chain of light to the impending Messianic future; seeing and rejoicing in the glory of God, which, though now for a season shrouded behind the clouds of disaster, is soon to burst forth in a unique day."

"Dead or unconscious sin is still sin. The fire in a cave discovers reptiles and stirs them, but they were there before; the light does not create them. Let a beam of light, says Jean Paul Richter, through your window shutters into a darkened room, and you reveal a thousand motes floating in the air, whose existence was before unsuspected. So the law of God reveals our hidden faults, infirmities, imperfections, evil tendencies and desires, which cannot all be classed as acts of transgressions."

Rev. A. H. Strong, D. D.

"We preach more on the love of God, than on his holy rigor, (how natural that in this day!) on sins against the social state like theft, lying and adultery, more than on the sins that are purely spiritual, and an injury against God."

Rev. N. J. Burton, D. D.

"We might go freezing, ages, give us fire,
Thereafter we judge fire at its full worth,
And guard it safe through every chance, ye know!"

Robert Browning.

"So belief cometh of hearing, and hearing by the Word of Christ." Rom. x. 17.

CHAPTER XIV.

ANALYSIS OF CHAPTERS. (NEW TESTAMENT.)

THE difficulties of Bible reading increase as we come into the hallowed precincts of New Testament revelation. The conversations of the Son of Man, the pictorial beauty and rapidly changing scenes of the Acts of the Apostles, as the planting and training of the Christian Church is unfolded; the comprehensive and varied themes treated in the epistolary portions, each require most thoughtful and loving study, and in the last analysis will leave us in an attitude of wonder and worship at the unexplored tracts which stretch beyond our ken.

The first verse of the first Epistle of the beloved disciple, suggests more than it reveals:

"That which was from the beginning, that which we beheld, and our hands handled, *concerning* the Word of life."

We can only give expression in human tones *concerning* Him. The deep sea-soundings of the fourth gospel: the abysses and altitudes of the veil-removing book which closes the sacred canon, we can utter but in part, and that a small part. Our Lord was a man of infinities. Ever and anon His words carry us

over into the vastness and uncircumscribed fullness of the invisible world. Says a Christian pastor, who recently passed away to his reward, from the city where these lines are written, "In many a word of Jesus given us, especially by St. John, it has sometimes seemed to me for the moment, that I could scarcely endure them, they are so fraught with seriousness, and tenderness, and foreboding, and moral firmness and majesty and I know not what besides; as a man speaking out of an infinite meditativeness; and out of infinite agitations of sensibility." Elsewhere he speaks of the conversations of Christ in this wise:—"My convictions of the Divinity of the Scriptures have been gained by these realistic touches, these imaginative reproductions of scenes and conversations in Jesus' life, more I think than in any other way. I shall never be able to describe the impression I have sometimes received of the depth, tenderness, and grandeur of Christ as a spiritual teacher, and a more than man, when I have been simply reading and listening to Him in His frequent dialogues with the people He happened to meet."

Our problem is to get out these effects in *tone*, to enrich others with their affluent, measureless freight of meaning. Let us not despair, at least until we have looked well and deeply into the possible adaptations of the

human voice, supplemented by the color-giving property of other portions of the human organism. What memories come to us of cadences now hushed forever here! "It was like my mother's voice," said a friend, as a stranger's word touched a chord in his heart, which brought a dear but vanished personality back to him.

As in the selections from the Old Testament, we have given a series of readings upon Sin, in those which are added from the New, we shall arrange a similar number of passages upon Redemption, the conspicuous theme of this portion of the Bible.

I. *Redemption as the Father's joy.* Luke xv. chapter.

The two-leaved portal to the main parable of this chapter, is made up of the smaller parables on the lost sheep and the lost piece of money, both uttered in connection with the one on the prodigal son, by our Lord, as His answer to the charge of the Pharisees and Scribes that He was receiving sinners and eating with them. "The first two," says Trench, "set forth the *seeking* love of God, the last His receiving love." What depths of love in both these aspects are revealed in the brief compass of these heavenly gospels! For gospels in brief they are. The title "Evangelium in Evangelio" which has been applied to the parable of the prodigal son, might with pro-

priety be given to those which immediately precede it, and which, like the "porch of the throne" in Solomon's house, lead up to the height and summit of Divine love in the heart of God. The parabolic form of instruction reaches its culmination here.

Tennyson, in verses cast in the mould of perfect rhythm, has written of Christ's gift to us in this mode of teaching:—

Though truths in manhood darkly join,
Deep-seated in our mystic frame,
We yield all blessing to the name
Of Him that made them current coin;

For wisdom dealt with mortal powers,
Where truth in closest words shall fail,
When truth embodied in a tale
Shall enter in at lowly doors.

And so the Word had breath, and wrought
With human hands the creed of creeds
In loveliness of perfect deeds,
More strong than all poetic thought;

Which he may read that binds the sheaf,
Or builds the house, or digs the grave,
And those wild eyes that watch the wave
In roarings round the coral reef.

The eye of the Son is glancing deeply into the Father's heart in each of these parables. When the sheep is brought home, and the piece of money found, in both cases there is a calling together of friends and neighbors to share in the festival of rejoicing, but here the Father is in the background, as

though the infinite deep of His nature was moved over the event. In the last parable He emerges into full sight bringing to mind the prophet's words, "He will rejoice over thee with joy, He will rest in His love, He will joy over thee with singing." The famine and degradation away from home, the return, and the reception, together with the churlish complaint of the elder son and the Father's answer, these are the diamond-like facets of the crown jewel of all the parables. The apostle Peter with his tear-dimmed eye, at the cock crowing on the last morning of his earthly life, or the beloved disciple in the waning days at Ephesus, might be able to read out the hidden love of this parable. But for us—?

II. *Redemption as the Son's Felicity.* John ix. chapter.

Nowhere else in the New Testament have we presented to us with such definiteness, the successive stages of the soul's apprehension of Christ, from blindness to full recognition, as in this monograph of the apostle John. The physical organs of this man, blind from his birth, were restored almost immediately; the slower process of opening "the eye and prospect of the soul" to the person and work of Christ is disclosed step by step with such insight and skill as to render the chapter, when well read, one of the most impressive and powerful in Scripture. Note the very low

starting point of his estimate of Christ. After the astonishment of the neighbors and others, who had known him as a blind beggar, and the doubts as to his identity had been expressed:—"They said therefore unto him, How then were thine eyes opened? He answered, The man that is called Jesus made clay, and anointed mine eyes, and said unto me, Go to Siloam and wash: so I went away and washed, and I received sight. And they said unto him, Where is he? He saith, I know not." Then the Pharisees take him in hand, and they in their perplexity and determination not to admit the miracle, turn to him with the question:—"What sayest thou of him, in that he opened thine eyes? And he said, He is a prophet." Next the parents are called to assist in deciding the case, and they find a safe way out of possible complication by saying, "He is of age, ask him." Now these Pharisees are seized with a pseudo-holy zeal, and say to the man before them, "Give glory to God, we know that this man is a sinner. He therefore answered, Whether he be a sinner I know not: one thing I know, that, whereas I was blind, now I see."

But in the following colloquy, as he is under fire in the presence of the Pharisees, reflection works, and he advances beyond this conclusion. "The man answered and said unto them, Why, herein is the marvel, that ye know not

whence he is, and yet he opened mine eyes. We know that God heareth not sinners; but if any man be a worshipper of God, and do his will, him he heareth. Since the world began it was never heard that any one opened the eyes of a man born blind."

Soon after the Lord finds him and discerns in him ripeness for the last stage, the full revelation of Himself. "Jesus heard that they had cast him out; and finding him he said, Dost thou believe on the Son of God? He answered and said, And who is he, Lord, that I may believe on him? Jesus said unto him, Thou hast both seen him, and he it is that speaketh with thee. And he said, Lord I believe. And he worshipped him." The ascending series of this man's visions of Christ is clearly marked. First, Christ is seen as a man simply, then a prophet, then as a sinner possibly; next that possibility vanishes, He is of God; finally the man is prostrate at His feet, worshiping Him as the Son of God.

III. *Providential Co-operation in Redemption.* Acts x. chapter.

Cæsarea and Joppa, towns on the Mediterranean coast, thirty-five miles apart, are the local points of this natural and graphic narrative. Cornelius, the centurion, wearing the Roman armor, and Peter the apostle, the saint "who by the ocean prayed," are brought face to face, and by singular providences, the

web of their destinies is woven together. The tableaux which are grouped in the chapter to form a great historic presentation of the transition period of the Christian history are Cornelius' vision, the embassy to Peter, the house-top dream of the latter, his presence, reception and preaching at Cæsarea followed by the descent of the Spirit upon the Gentile company assembled. The age-worn wall of separation fell that day, and the apostle himself in astonishment at what his own eyes beheld, said: "Can any man forbid the water, that these should not be baptized, who have received the Holy Ghost as well as we?"

IV. *Personal Redemption from the power of sin.* Romans vi. chapter.

The argument of the apostle in this Epistle to the Romans, advances, without a break in its masterly continuity, from the first to the triumphant summing up at the close of the eighth chapter. The sixth chapter constitutes, however, an answer complete in itself, to the objection that grace might lead to license. One feels the nervous vigor, and suppressed emotion with which this objection is met and overthrown. From the first verse to the twelfth he shows how grace puts us in new relations to Christ, by virtue of which a new nature which is averse to sin, becomes our second nature. The Christian life is thus no weak, nebulous affair, but a union of the spirit

with Christ by reason of which, what has transpired in Him transpires in us also, as being members of His body. "For if we have become united with him by the likeness of his death, we shall be also by the likeness of his resurrection; knowing this, that our old man was crucified with him, that the body of sin might be done away, that so we should no longer be in bondage to sin." From the twelfth to the fifteenth verses we have an exhortation to present ourselves unto God as those that are alive from the dead: and our members as instruments of righteousness unto God. In the closing section, he raises and answers in another form the question of the first verse of the chapter:—

"What then? shall we sin, because we are not under law, but under grace? God forbid." What a clean sweep of all complicity with the old nature, does he make in the verses which remain! Every capacity goes over to Christ; no laggard faculty remains behind. All passes on to take its place in the new man in Christ Jesus. The issue is thus stated:—"But now being made free from sin, and become servants of God, ye have your fruit unto sanctification, and the end eternal life. For the wages of sin is death; but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord."

V. *Redemption in its triumph on Earth.* Revelation xix. chapter.

It is a noble statement, that of Dorner, that, "there is a consummation of individuals and of the whole, especially of the church, which is not realized through a purely immanent uninterrupted process, but through crises and Christ's Second Advent." Believers holding most diverse views of the order of events, which usher in this consummation, are agreed in recognizing the sublimity of the descriptions of the Apocalypse. Randolph of Roanoke, it is said, was fascinated by simply hearing its chapters read. Macaulay says of the prose writings of Milton: "They are a perfect field of cloth of gold. The style is stiff with gorgeous embroidery." All sublime images of previous revelations gather in this book of the last things, making its style "stiff" with treasured sign and symbol. The beginning of the nineteenth chapter is a seven-fold chorus of praise. No celebration of joy like it, says a late commentator, is to be found in Revelation. From the eleventh to the seventeenth verses we have a vision of the majestic pageant of which the central figure is one, "called Faithful and True; and in righteousness he doth judge and make war. And his eyes are a flame of fire, and upon his head are many diadems; and he hath a name written, which no one knoweth but he himself. And he is arrayed in a garment sprinkled with blood;

and his name is called the Word of God." The passages following present the last conflict and victory preceding the binding of Satan.

The imperfect exegeses of these and similar passages should form no objection to their use in public reading. We are awed and calmed by looking upon the Alpine summit which we cannot scale. So from these fastnesses of the book of God, there come impressions to the soul, which breathe holy calm, and inspire worship. We may with Augustine, say: "Wonderful are the depths of thine oracles! Behold how their surface charms little ones; but wonderful depth, O my God, what wonderful depth! One shudders at the contemplation of it,—a thrill of reverence and trembling of love!"

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